PRELUDE TO MODERN PROSE

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PREFACE

The extracts chosen for this Anthology have several things in common. All are from books published within the last twenty-five years—the majority, indeed, since the last war; all have been chosen both for the subject matter and the quality of the prose; all are the writings of people whose achievements extend beyond authorship into other fields of activity; mostly, they are works of fact.

The main object of the book is to bring to the attention of young people the wealth of good literature outside fiction that is theirs for the reading. Not that any prejudice is felt against fiction—far from it. In fact, two of the extracts here have a fictional flavour. But much inspiration is to be drawn from a true tale of human accomplishment —and we all need reminding sometimes of the heights to which our fellow beings can climb.

It is suggested that this book could be profitably used in every type of Secondary School. The questions have been designed mostly to sound the pupil's powers of comprehension, and so to add to his or her enjoyment of the piece. The fourth question is in each case slightly more difficult and is intended for the more advanced pupils.

I am grateful to Mr. Paul Griffin for his helpful criticism. My thanks are due also to the Reprint Society for permission to quote from the *Broadsheet*; to Mr. John Moore for helpful information about his book *Brensham Village*; to Messrs. George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., for news of Mr. Thor Heyerdahl; and to the Oxford University Press for supplying me with notes about the late Colonel Jim Corbett.

M. W. P.

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THOR HEYERDAHL

THE KON-TIKI EXPEDITION

Introductory Note

Few books of adventure published in the past decade have created such a stir as *The Kon-Tiki Expedition.* The story of the voyage is too well known to merit any repetition here.

There was powerful scientific reasoning behind that voyage—namely, Heyerdahl's theory that the inhabitants of the Pacific Islands originally came from the west coast of America, a voyage of some 4300 miles across the Pacific. But his views were treated with polite scorn by the experts, who posed this stern question—how could these primitive peoples from America, having only open rafts, have discovered the Pacific Islands? Such a practical objection to the theory seemed to smash it to smithereens. Heyerdahl was convinced that it could be done and adopted the most startling course to prove it.

Even with the voyage triumphantly concluded, Heyerdahl knew that there was still a great deal to be done to convince other learned ethnologists of the soundness of his theory. For two years he lived in a log cabin in a remote part of eastern Norway—writing. The outcome of this long study was *American Indians in the Pacific: the theory behind the Kon-Tiki*

Expedition. This book contains a mass of evidence in support of his theory.

The raft itself has found a most suitable resting-place, on an island in the Oslo fiord alongside *Fram*, the vessel of the great Norwegian explorer, Nansen.

The only Swede in the crew of six, Bengt Danielsson, remained on the Pacific Islands where they landed and has recently published a book on his experiences there. The others returned to the various occupations they were pursuing before they undertook the raft expedition.

A tale of such courage, such steadfast faith in one's own opinion, could scarcely fail to be inspiring. Yet Thor Heyerdahl's book stands firm on its merit as literature; it requires no ordinary skill to describe a long voyage of considerable monotony in such a way as to grip the reader's attention throughout. Heyerdahl has done this by virtue of a writer's most useful gift—the ability to express himself in a style at once both simple and pleasant to read. And in praising the author, the excellent translation from Norwegian into English by F. H. Lyon should not be forgotten.



Jorge's story of the head-hunters belongs to the early days of the expedition. On their way to the Quivedo Jungle—the promised land where balsa wood for the raft was to be found—Heyerdahl and his companion meet Jorge and hear this remarkable tale. As an anti-climax, they collected their timber in the jungle without encountering any head-hunters.

HEADS FOR SALE

Our friend from the cargo plane, Jorge, nicknamed ' the crazy flyer ', belonged to one of the old Spanish families in Quito. He installed us in an antiquated, amusing hotel, and then went round, sometimes with and sometimes without us, trying to get us transport over the mountains and down into the jungle to Quivedo. We met in the evening in an old Spanish café, and Jorge was full of bad news; we must just put the idea of going to Quivedo out of our heads. Neither men nor vehicles were to be obtained to take us over the mountains, and certainly not down into the jungle where the rains had begun, and where there was a danger of attack if one stuck fast in the mud. Only last year a party of ten American oil engineers had been found killed by poisoned arrows in the eastern part of Ecuador, where there were still great numbers of forest Indians who went about in the jungle stark naked and hunted with poisoned arrows.

' Some of them are head-hunters,' Jorge said in a hollow voice, seeing that Herman, quite unperturbed, was helping himself to more beef and red wine.

' You think I exaggerate,' he continued in a low voice. ' But although it is strictly forbidden, there are still people in this country who make a living by selling shrunken human heads. It's impossible to control it, so to this very day the jungle Indians cut off the heads of their enemies among other nomad

ribes. They smash up and remove the skull itself and fill the empty skin of the head with hot sand, so that the whole head shrinks till it's hardly bigger than a cat's head, without losing its shape or its features. These shrunken heads of enemies were once valuable trophies, now they're rare black market goods. Half-breed middle-men see that they get down to the buyers on the coast, who sell them to tourists for fabulous prices.'

Jorge looked at us triumphantly. He little knew that Herman and I that same day had been dragged into a porter's lodge and offered two of these heads at 1000 sucres apiece. These heads nowadays are often fakes, made up from monkeys' heads, but these two were genuine enough, pure Indians, and so true to life that every single tiny feature was preserved. They were the heads of a man and a woman, both the size of oranges; the woman was actually pretty, though only the eyelashes and long black hair had preserved their natural size. I shuddered at the thought, but expressed my doubts whether there were head-hunters west of the mountains.

'One can never know,' said Jorge gloomily. 'And what would you say if your friend disappeared and his head came into the market in miniature? That happened to a friend of mine once,' he added, staring at me stubbornly.

'Tell us about it,' said Herman, chewing his beef slowly and with only moderate enjoyment.

I laid my fork carefully aside, and Jorge told his story. He was once living with his wife on an outpost in the jungle, washing gold and buying up the take

of the other gold-washers. The family had at that time a native friend who brought his gold regularly and sold it for goods. One day this friend was killed in the jungle. Jorge tracked down the murderer and threatened to shoot him. Now the murderer was one of those who were suspected of selling shrunken human heads, and Jorge promised to spare his life if he handed over the head at once. The murderer at once produced the head of Jorge's friend, now as small as a man's fist. Jorge was quite upset when he saw his friend again, for he was quite unchanged, except that he had become so very small. Much moved, he took the little head home to his wife. She fainted when she saw it, and Jorge had to hide his friend in a trunk. But it was so damp in the jungle that clusters of green mould formed on the head, so that Jorge had to take it out now and then and dry it in the sun. It hung very nicely by the hair on a clothes-line, and Jorge's wife fainted every time she caught sight of it. But one day a mouse gnawed its way into the trunk and made a horrid mess of his friend. Jorge was much distressed and buried his friend with full ceremonies in a tiny little hole up on the airfield. For after all he was a human being, Jorge concluded.

'Nice dinner,' I said, to change the subject.

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WHALE SHARK

I was having a refreshing plunge overboard at the bows, lying in the water, keeping a good look out and hanging on to a rope-end, when I caught sight of a thick brown fish, six feet long, which came swimming inquisitively towards me through the crystal-clear sea water. I hopped quickly up on to the edge of the raft and sat in the hot sun looking at the fish as it passed quietly, when I heard a wild war-whoop from Knut, who was sitting aft behind the bamboo cabin. He bellowed 'Shark!' till his voice cracked in a falsetto, and as we had sharks swimming alongside the raft almost daily without creating such excitement, we all realised that this must be something extra special, and flocked astern to Knut's assistance.

Knut had been squatting there, washing his pants in the swell, and when he looked up for a moment he was staring straight into the biggest and ugliest face any of us had ever seen in the whole of our lives. It was the head of a veritable sea monster, so huge and so hideous that if the Old Man of the Sea himself had come up he could not have made such an impression on us. The head was broad and flat like a frog's, with two small eyes right at the sides, and a toadlike jaw which was four or five feet wide and had long fringes hanging drooping from the corners of the mouth. Behind the head was an enormous body ending in a long thin tail with a pointed tail

fin which stood straight up and showed that this sea monster was not any kind of whale. The body looked brownish under the water, but both head and body were thickly covered with small white spots. The monster came quietly, lazily swimming after us from astern. It grinned like a bulldog and lashed gently with its tail. The large round dorsal fin projected clear of the water and sometimes the tail fin as well, and when the creature was in the trough of the swell the water flowed about the broad back as though washing round a submerged reef. In front of the broad jaws swam a whole crowd of zebra-striped pilot fish in fan formation, and large remora fish and other parasites sat firmly attached to the huge body and travelled with it through the water, so that the whole thing looked like a curious zoological collection crowded round something that resembled a floating deep-water reef.

A 25 lbs. dolphin, attached to six of our largest fish-hooks, was hanging behind the raft as bait for sharks, and a swarm of pilot fish shot straight off, nosed the dolphin without touching it, and then hurried back to their lord and master, the sea king. Like a mechanical monster it set its machinery going and came gliding at leisure towards the dolphin which lay, a beggarly trifle, before its jaws. We tried to pull the dolphin in, and the sea monster followed slowly, right up to the side of the raft. It did not open its mouth, but just let the dolphin bump against it, as if to throw open the whole door for such an insignificant scrap was not worth while. When the giant came right up to the raft, it rubbed

its back against the heavy steering oar, which was just lifted up out of the water, and now we had ample opportunity of studying the monster at the closest quarters—at such close quarters that I thought we had all gone mad, for we roared stupidly with laughter and shouted over-excitedly at the completely fantastic sight we saw. Walt Disney himself, with all his powers of imagination, could not have created a more hair-raising sea monster than that which thus suddenly lay with its terrific jaws along the raft's side.

The monster was a whale shark, the largest shark and the largest fish known in the world to-day. It is exceedingly rare, but scattered specimens are observed here and there in the tropical oceans. The whale shark has an average length of 50 feet, and according to zoologists it weighs 15 tons. It is said that large specimens can attain a length of 65 feet, and a harpooned baby had a liver weighing 600 lbs., and a collection of three thousand teeth in each of its broad jaws.

The monster was so large that when it began to swim in circles round us and under the raft its head was visible on one side while the whole of its tail stuck out on the other. And so incredibly grotesque, inert and stupid did it appear when seen full-face that we could not help shouting with laughter, although we realised that it had strength enough in its tail to smash both balsa logs and ropes to pieces if it attacked us. Again and again it described narrower and narrower circles just under the raft, while all we could do was to wait and see what might happen

When out on the other side it glided amiably under the steering oar and lifted it up in the air, while the oar-blade slid along the creature's back. We stood round the raft with hand harpoons ready for action, but they seemed to us like toothpicks in relation to the heavy beast we had to deal with. There was no indication that the whale shark ever thought of leaving us again; it circled round us and followed like a faithful dog, close to the raft. None of us had ever experienced or thought we should experience anything like it; the whole adventure, with the sea monster swimming behind and under the raft, seemed to us so completely unnatural that we could not really take it seriously.

In reality the whale shark went on encircling us for barely an hour, but to us the visit seemed to last a whole day. At last it became too exciting for Erik, who was standing at a corner of the raft with an eight-foot hand harpoon, and encouraged by ill-considered shouts, he raised the harpoon above his head. As the whale shark came gliding slowly towards him, and had got its broad head right under the corner of the raft, Erik thrust the harpoon with all his giant strength down between his legs and deep into the whale shark's gristly head. It was a second or two before the giant understood properly what was happening. Then in a flash the placid half-wit was transformed into a mountain of steel muscles. We heard a swishing noise as the harpoon line rushed over the edge of the raft, and saw a cascade of water as the giant stood on its head and plunged down into the depths. The three men who were

standing nearest were flung about the place head over heels, and two of them were flayed and burnt by the line as it rushed through the air. The thick line, strong enough to hold a boat, was caught up on the side of the raft but snapped at once like a piece of twine, and a few seconds later a broken-off harpoon shaft came up to the surface two hundred yards away. A shoal of frightened pilot fish shot off through the water in a desperate attempt to keep up with their old lord and master, and we waited a long time for the monster to come racing back like an infuriated submarine; but we never saw anything more of the whale shark.



MAN OVERBOARD

On July 21 the wind suddenly died away again. It was oppressive and absolutely still, and we knew from previous experience what this might mean. And right enough, after a few violent gusts from east and west and south, the wind freshened up to a breeze from southward, where black, threatening clouds had again rushed up over the horizon. Herman was out with his anemometer all the time, measuring already fifty feet and more per second, when suddenly Torstein's sleeping bag went overboard. And what happened in the next few seconds took a much shorter time than it takes to tell it.

Herman tried to catch the bag as it went, took a rash step and fell overboard. We heard a faint cry

for help amid the noise of the waves, and saw Herman's head and a waving arm, as well as some vague green object twirling about in the water near him. He was struggling for life to get back to the raft through the high seas which had lifted him out from the port side. Torstein, who was at the steering oar aft, and I myself, up in the bows, were the first to perceive him, and we went cold with fear. We bellowed 'man overboard!' at the pitch of our lungs as we rushed to the nearest life-saving gear. The others had not heard Herman's cry at all because of the noise of the sea, but in a trice there was life and bustle on deck. Herman was an excellent swimmer, and though we realised at once that his life was at stake, we had a fair hope that he would manage to crawl back to the edge of the raft before it was too late.

Torstein, who was nearest, seized the bamboo drum round which was the line we used for the boat, for this was within his reach. It was the only time on the whole voyage that this line got caught up. The whole thing happened in a few seconds. Herman was now on a level with the stern of the raft, but a few yards away, and his last hope was to crawl to the blade of the steering oar and hang on to it. As he missed the end of the logs, he reached out for the oar-blade, but it slipped away from him. And there he lay, just where experience had shown we could get nothing back. While Bengt and I launched the dinghy, Knut and Erik threw out the lifebelt. Carrying a long line, it hung ready for use on the corner of the cabin roof, but to-dav the wind strong

that when they threw the lifebelt it was simply blown back to the raft. After a few unsuccessful throws Herman was already far astern of the steering oar, swimming desperately to keep up with the raft, while the distance increased with each gust of wind. He realised that henceforth the gap would simply go on increasing, but he set a faint hope on the dinghy, which we had now got into the water. Without the line which acted as a brake, it would perhaps have been practicable to drive the rubber raft to meet the swimming man, but whether the rubber raft would ever get back to the Kon-Tiki was another matter. Nevertheless, three men in a rubber dinghy had some chance, one man in the sea had none.

Then we suddenly saw Knut take off and plunge head first into the sea. He had the lifebelt in one hand and was heaving himself along. Every time Herman's head appeared on a wave-back Knut was gone, and every time Knut came up Herman was not there. But then we saw both heads at once; they had swum to meet each other and both were hanging on to the lifebelt. Knut waved his arm, and as the rubber raft had meanwhile been hauled on board, all four of us took hold of the line of the lifebelt and hauled for dear life, with our eyes fixed on the great dark object which was visible just behind the two men. This same mysterious beast in the water was pushing a big greenish-black triangle up above the wave-crests; it almost gave Knut a shock when he was on his way over to Herman. Only Herman knew then that the triangle did not belong to a shark or any other sea monster. It was an inflated

corner of Torstein's water-tight sleeping bag. But the sleeping bag did not remain floating for long after we had hauled the two men safe and sound on board. Whatever dragged the sleeping bag down into the depths had just missed a better prey.

'Glad I wasn't in it,' said Torstein, and took hold of the steering oar where he had let it go.

But otherwise there were not many cheery cracks that evening. We all felt a chill running through nerve and bone for a long time afterwards. But the cold shivers were mingled with a warm thankfulness that there were still six of us on board.

FITZROY MACLEAN

EASTERN APPROACHES

Introductory Note

To enlist as a private in the army by virtue of standing for parliament is about as unusual an entry into the services as can be imagined. When in 1939 Fitzroy Maclean found himself in a reserved occupation—one so reserved, in fact, that he was warned that, should he run away and enlist, he would be brought back to the Foreign Office 'in irons, if necessary'—he combed through Foreign Office Regulations to find a means of escape. In Fitzroy Maclean's own words——

'I asked for an interview with the Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Sir Alexander Cadogan. . . .

'"And what do you want?" said Sir Alexander, who was a busy man, looking up from his desk.

'"I want to go into politics," I said.

'"In that case," he replied, . . . "you will have to leave the Service."

'I replied that I was prepared for that. In fact, if he liked I could let him have my resignation at once. And, laying a neatly written letter of resignation on his desk, I escaped from the room. A few minutes later I was in a taxi and on my way to the nearest Recruiting Office.'

Fitzroy Maclean was as good as his word—he did go into politics. As a subaltern in the Cameron Highlanders, he fought—and won—a by-election at Lancaster, whose M.P. he has remained ever since. Military duties, however, came first, and most of the book *Eastern Approaches* tells the story of one man's very distinguished war.

The first of these extracts describes the days before the war when the author was a member of the Diplomatic Corps in Russia. There he would not allow the dignity of his position to prevent him from scouting out alone into the interior of Russia and Russia-in-Asia whenever opportunity arose. Thus he collected a heap of interesting impressions of this little-known territory. These impressions make up the first part of the book.

The second extract—the kidnapping of the Persian general—took place in the autumn of 1942, precisely at that period of the war when the initiative was swinging away from the Germans. Already Fitzroy Maclean had seen a great deal of action in the Desert with the Long Range Desert Group—that remarkable force which had mastered both the enemy and desert conditions hundreds of miles behind enemy-lines.

His presence in Persia is explained by the fact that he was summoned there by the Commander-in-Chief *to raise a guerilla force to operate among the Germans* should they succeed in overrunning the country. The job at Isfahan was a sudden crisis which found the right man in the right place to carry it out.

It was shortly after this incident that Fitzroy Maclean dropped by parachute over Yugoslavia,

where for the rest of the war he headed the British team whose job it was to assist Tito's guerillas. Maclean, who was a Brigadier when the war ended, has now left the army and is sometimes to be heard of questing into the more remote corners of Europe and Asia.

APPROACH TO BOKHARA

I left Moscow on October 7th by a more or less comfortable express train bound for Ashkhabad, the capital of Turkmenistan. Not only did it boast a restaurant-car, which is apt to be a somewhat problematical feature of Soviet trains, but the crew of the latter turned out to be old friends, already encountered on a previous journey. I was greeted effusively and before I had had time to order anything was confronted with half a tumbler of vodka and a plate of cabbage soup, which had evidently stuck in my friends' memory as staple articles of my diet. My fellow passengers were for the most part officers of the N.K.V.D. Frontier Troops, travelling back to the outposts of empire on the Oxus and in the Pamirs, fully conscious of belonging to a *corps d'élite*.

For two whole days after leaving Moscow we travelled through European Russia: pine woods birch woods; villages of decayed wooden isba clustering round decayed white churches and in habited by decayed-looking peasants; magpies o

stumps, in flight and on telegraph wires; the Volga, a mighty stream.

On the third evening we reached Orenburg, which for more than one hundred years marked the farthest point of Russia's advance against the Kirghiz and Turkomans and the Khans of Bokhara and Khiva. On a previous occasion when I had passed through Orenburg, presumably merely on account of my doubtful appearance, I had been arrested on the platform outside my railway carriage and had almost been left behind. This time I was more careful and nothing untoward occurred.

By next morning we were well into Asia and for two days travelled through the Kara Kum or Black Desert, a howling wilderness of (paradoxically) pale red sand and parched and distorted shrubs and grass, its monotony broken half-way through by the dreary storm-swept expanse of the Sea of Aral and its bleak mud flats. At the stopping-places the Kirghiz and Kazakh women in their high mediaeval head-dresses and long coats of dirty velvet came out of their round skin tents to sell us kumiss, fermented mare's or camel's milk, flat unleavened loaves, melons, skeins of camel-hair, dried fish from the Sea of Aral, necklaces of cockle-shells, and, occasionally, [illegible]. Remembering journeys when I had been [illegible] dependent on their products, I was glad of the restaurant-car and its cabbage soup.

In the middle of the fifth night we reached Tashkent and next morning awoke to find ourselves [illegible] oasis of Samarkand. To the north, the [illegible] of Kirghizia, the west[illegible]

Shan Range, were in sight and, instead of the Hungry Steppe, the vineyards and cotton fields of Uzbekistan. At the wayside stations, Uzbeks with oval faces and regular features in brightly striped khalats, sashes and turbans or embroidered skull-caps had taken the place of the Kazakhs and Kirghiz in their sheepskins. In the villages flat-roofed houses of sun-baked mud bricks had replaced the skin tents of the nomads.

During the long train journey I had had plenty of time to consider my plans and had decided not to postpone my attempt to reach Bokhara until my return journey. I would go there at once. Samarkand would have to be left this time, unless I were to prejudice my chances of reaching Bokhara; and so I resisted the temptation to revisit the glittering domes of Shakh Zinda and the Gur Emir, and reluctantly contented myself with buying some grapes for my breakfast on the platform of Samarkand railway station. Westwards from Samarkand I was travelling through a part of Uzbekistan which was new to me, but which had little to distinguish it from the country farther east, except that it was perhaps rather more fertile, for we were now following the course of the Zaravshan, the river which waters the oases of both Samarkand and Bokhara.

At Kagan, which we reached in the afternoon, and which looked very much like any other small Soviet railway station, I shouldered my luggage and slipped unobtrusively from the train. Two alert-looking young men, whom I had already noticed in the dining-car, did so too. I deposited my luggage in the luggage office. They followed my example. I strolled

into the station buffet. They came too, developing a sudden interest in a bun whenever I stopped. There was no doubt who they were. So long, however, as they did not interfere with me, I had no objection to being followed by them. If, as I suspected, their purpose was to see what I did, rather than to stop me from doing it, I had no reason to anticipate trouble from them. What I needed to avoid at all costs was unduly attracting the attention of the local authorities who were far more likely to interfere.

My first object was to ascertain as discreetly as possible how to get to Bokhara. I believed that an occasional train still ran along what used once to be the Emir's State Railway. This idea, however, had to be abandoned almost immediately, for the first person I met on emerging from the luggage office was a portly local Jewess lamenting loudly that the only train of the day had already gone and that there was no bus service. While I was condoling with her and wondering what to do next, I caught sight of a lorry laden with bales of cotton moving off down the only road in sight which, I felt, probably [illegible] Bokhara. A short sprint and a flying jump landed [illegible] head first in a rather loosely packed bale of [illegible] from which I emerged to see one of my [illegible] men running after the lorry, which he obviously [illegible] not a hope of catching, while the other [illegible] into the door of the Militia guard-room presumably in order to get help. Meanwhile, the lorry, [illegible] on board, was heading for the open country and showing a pretty turn of speed. The [illegible] was fraught with [illegible]

At this point the lorry suddenly stopped for no apparent reason, and a few seconds later a breathless N.K.V.D. man landed in the next cotton bale to mine. I felt reassured and hoped that his colleague would not now persist in his intention of turning out the guard and that I should be able to complete my journey to Bokhara undisturbed in this providential vehicle.

But this was not to be. The sight of two people jumping on to a lorry had put the same idea into a number of other heads. There was a rush and we were trampled over and rolled on as the lorry filled with a variegated crowd of Uzbeks, kicking and biting, as only Uzbeks can, in their efforts to get themselves on and their friends off.

All might yet have been well, had not the driver, who had let in the clutch and was moving off again, at this point put his head round the corner and caught sight of this multitude of uninvited passengers. It was, he said, overdoing it. One or two might pass, but not a whole crowd. We must all get off at once. There ensued a general argument which ended in the driver letting down the sides of the lorry and pushing off as many of his passengers as he could reach, while others climbed in again on the other side.

This might have lasted indefinitely, when I saw something which caused me to get off the lorry hurriedly and disappear into some trees at the side of the road where I was joined by my N.K.V.D. man.

A car was coming down the road from the station containing my other N.K.V.D. man and a uniformed officer of State Security. Meanwhile the lorry

having got rid of most of its passengers, had started once again on its way. It was quickly overtaken by the police car and stopped a hundred yards farther on. The driver was made to get out and cross-questioned and finally every bale of cotton was gone through. Meanwhile the first N.K.V.D. man, crouching beside me in the bushes, remained, inexplicably, where he was without giving any sign of life. As I watched the progress of the search from my hiding-place, I decided that the interest which the local authorities were showing in my movements was far from reassuring. I consoled myself, however, with the thought that the zeal which they were now displaying might peter out, as so many things do peter out in Central Asia.

Having completed his search of the lorry and allowed the somewhat bewildered driver to proceed on his way, the officer of State Security now climbed back into his car and drove off, leaving his plain-clothes colleague from the capital standing in the middle of the road. From the bushes, I watched his departure with feelings of unmixed relief. I had by this time decided that my only hope of reaching Bokhara was to walk there and wondered why I had not thought of this before. My ideas about distance were vague, but I had an idea that the Emir's little train was supposed to take about an hour, so that it could not be very far. The road taken by the lorry was the only one in sight, so I came out of the bushes and started off along it, while my escort fell in behind at a discreet distance, wondering, I imagine, what was coming next.

Apart from the railway station, N.K.V.D. Headquarters, one or two cotton mills and a distressing structure of uncertain use combining all the worst features of both European and Oriental architecture, Kagan has little claim to be called a town, and we were soon in the open country. On either side of the road flowering fields of cotton stretched as far as the eye could reach, intersected by irrigation ditches. From time to time I passed clusters of two or three native farmsteads amid poplars and other trees. Through an occasional open gate, set in high mud walls, I caught sight of a courtyard, with, in the living-quarters on the far side, an open door and a fire burning in the living-room. Uzbek houses have changed very little since the days of Tamerlane.

From time to time the road branched and I was left in some doubt whether to go to the left or the right. The sun was setting and the prospect of spending the night wandering about Uzbekistan looking for Bokhara in an entirely wrong direction did not appeal to me. On the whole I allowed myself to be guided by the endless caravans of two-humped Bactrian dromedaries, which, I imagined, were, like myself, making for the city of Bokhara. The peculiarly sweet tone of their bells sounded reassuring in the gathering darkness. Behind me my followers in their neat Moscow-made blue suits and bright yellow shoes padded along disconsolately in the acrid-smelling, ankle-deep dust.

I walked for what seemed a very long time. It was by now quite dark and there was still no sign of Bokhara. I had come to feel less well-disposed

towards the dromedaries. With their vast bales of merchandise they took up the whole road, entangling me in their head ropes, breathing menacingly down my neck and occasionally lumbering up against me and pushing me into the ditch.

I was beginning to wonder if I had not after all taken the wrong road, and, if so, where it would lead me, when I noticed that the sky in the direction in which I was walking seemed slightly more luminous than elsewhere. It might, or it might not, be the reflected lights of a city. Soon the farmsteads along the road and in the fields became more numerous and the road took me between high mud walls enclosing orchards of apricot trees. It was very unlike the Soviet Union.

Then all at once the road took a turn, and topping a slight rise I found myself looking down on the broad white walls and watch towers of Bokhara spread out before me in the light of the rising moon.

Immediately in front of me stood one of the city gates, its great arch set in a massive fortified tower which rose high above the lofty crenellated walls. Following a string of dromedaries I passed through it into the city.

I possessed a fair knowledge of the writings of most of the European travellers who visited Bokhara during the past century and this made easier the task of identifying the principal buildings. Entering the city from the south-east, I followed the fairly straight street leading to the bazaars and centre of the town which has for centuries been followed by travellers and caravans from India, Persia and Afghanistan.

It was along this street that there passed in 1845, to the consternation of the population who had assembled in their thousands to witness his arrival, the Reverend Joseph Wolff, D.D., 'garbed', by his own account, in 'full canonicals', clergyman's gown, doctor's hood and shovel hat, and carrying a bible under his arm. By origin a Bavarian Jew, the son of a Rabbi, by vocation (after a brief but spirited passage with the Pope) a Church of England clergyman, the Eccentric Missionary, as he was known to his contemporaries, had set out at an advanced age to ascertain the fate of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly, two British officers who had been sent sometime previously by Her Majesty's Government on a mission to the Court of the Emir Nasrullah, with the ultimate aim of making Bokhara a British dominion before it became a Russian one.

Dr. Wolff ascertained the fate of the envoys soon enough. After months of what was in fact imprisonment they had been consigned to the well, twenty-one feet deep, where the Emir kept his specially bred vermin and reptiles. When, two months later, 'masses of their flesh having been gnawed off their bones', they had finally refused to turn Mussulman, they had been beheaded outside the Citadel. This had happened many months before Wolff's arrival. He himself attributed the failure of the mission to the action of the Prime Minister 'that bloodhound Abdul Samut Khan, in whos[e] character, it seems to me, the Foreign Office ha[d] been deceived'.

Soon the question of his own religious procliviti[es]

raised. The Chief Executioner was sent, a little tedly, by Abdul Samut Khan to ask him whether was prepared to embrace Islam. To this inquiry replied 'Decidedly not!' and sat down to write a ewell letter to his wife, the Lady Georgiana, with hom he had kept up an animated correspondence roughout his journey.

But his life, as it turned out, was saved by the strangeness of his appearance and behaviour. On his being brought before the Emir, still clad in full canonicals and with his bible still under his arm, that potentate, of whom he writes vividly, 'His Majesty has the whole appearance of a *bon vivant*', was seized with a fit of uncontrollable laughter, which re-doubled when the Eccentric Missionary prostrated himself thirty times, stroked his beard thirty times and cried 'Allah Akbar' thirty times, instead of the usual three. For, though not prepared to become a Mohammedan, Dr. Wolff was ready to go to considerable lengths in order to keep out of the vermin pit. The interview was thus a distinct success and culminated with the appearance of a 'musical band of Hindoos from Lahor' who gave a spirited rendering of 'God Save the Queen'. After further adventures, which included his temptation by means of an un-veiled woman specially sent for this purpose by the Prime Minister, Dr. Wolff was eventually suffered to leave Bokhara, greatly to the surprise of the popula tion, who were not accustomed to such clemenc and hailed the Emir's astonishing decision as a si heaven.

I reached the centre of the town. Seen thus, Bokhara seemed an enchanted city, with its pinnacles and domes and crumbling ramparts white and dazzling in the pale light of the moon. High above them all rose the Tower of Death, the oldest and most magnificent of the minarets. Built seven hundred years ago by the Karakhanides, who ruled in Bokhara before the Mongol invasion and the advent of Genghis Khan, it vies in purity of line and beauty of ornament with the finest architecture of the Italian Renaissance. For centuries before 1870, and again in the troubled years between 1917 and 1920, men were cast down to their death from the delicately ornamented gallery which crowns it. To-day a great Red Flag flaps from its summit.

Before me gaped one of the cavernous tunnels of the covered bazaar. There I bought from a plump Uzbek merchant sitting cross-legged at the entrance of his dimly lighted shop a flat round loaf of sour-tasting black bread, some fruit and a bottle of sweet red wine, and, repairing to the garden of a nearby mosque, sat down under a bush to rest and eat. Under the central arch of the old mosque the present rulers of Bokhara had erected a gleaming new white marble monument to Lenin and Stalin, lavishly draped with red bunting.

As I took a pull at my bottle of wine, I became aware of someone hovering uncertainly near me, and a quavering voice said, ‘ Please leave some for me ’. Then a very frail, very tattered old Russian with long white drooping moustaches emerged ghost-like from the shadows and stood waiting expectantly. I

gave him the wine. Tilting back his head, he raised the bottle to his mouth. There was a sound of gurgling, and he put it down empty. Then, with a mumbled word of thanks, he shuffled off into the darkness, leaving me with an odd sense of satisfaction at having thus by chance supplied a much felt need.

Cheered by this encounter and by my share of the wine, I took another stroll through the empty streets, and then returned to the garden, which I had decided to make my home for as long as I remained in Bokhara.



KIDNAP

At Teheran, I found General Baillon at the British Legation in conference with the Minister, Sir Reader Bullard. They told me that they had a job for me. For some time past, they said, there had been signs that some kind of trouble was brewing in south Persia. The tribes, the Qashgai and Bakhtiari, had German agents living amongst them and seemed likely to rise at any moment, just as they had in 1916 when their rebellion had caused us a disproportionate amount of trouble. Were this to happen, our supply route to the Persian Gulf might be cut. There was also discontent in Isfahan and other towns, largely caused by the hoarding of grain by speculators, which we were unable to prevent. This discontent might at any moment flare up into

open rebellion. Worse still, if there were trouble, the Persian troops in south Persia were likely to take the side of the rioters.

A sinister part was being played in all this by a certain General Zahidi, who was in command of the Persian forces in the Isfahan area. Zahidi was known to be one of the worst grain-horders in the country. But there was also good reason to believe that he was acting in co-operation with the tribal leaders and, finally, that he was in touch with the German agents who were living in the hills and, through them, with the German High Command in the Caucasus. Indeed, reports from secret sources showed that he was planning a general rising against the Allied occupation force, in which his troops and those of the Persian general in the Soviet-occupied northern zone would take part and which would coincide with a German airborne attack on the Tenth Army, followed by a general German offensive on the Caucasus front. In short, General Zahidi appeared to be behind most of the trouble in south Persia.

The situation was a delicate one. The Allied forces of occupation in northern Persia had been reduced to a minimum in order to meet demands from the fighting fronts; there were practically no Allied troops in south Persia at all. The nearest British troops to the seat of the trouble were at Qum, two hundred miles north of Isfahan. There was very rea danger that any sudden movement of British troop in a southward direction might provoke a genera rising which we should have serious difficulty i containing with the small forces at our disposal. O

the other hand, if we allowed events to take their course, the results would be equally disastrous.

In short it was essential to nip the trouble in the bud, while avoiding a full-scale showdown. General Baillon and Sir Reader Bullard had decided that this could best be achieved by the removal of General Zahidi and it was this task that they had decided to entrust to me. How it was to be done they left me to work out for myself. Only two conditions were made: I was to take him alive and I was to do so without creating a disturbance.

My first step was to go to Isfahan and see for myself how the land lay. That city's mosques and palaces, unrivalled in the whole of Asia, provided an excellent pretext for visiting it. I let it be known in Teheran that I was going to spend a few days' leave sight-seeing in the south, and set out.

I reached Isfahan the same night after driving all day across a bleak plateau fringed with distant snow-capped mountains. Finally the flickering lights of an isolated chai-khana shone out of the darkness, showing two or three dim figures squatting in the doorway, drinking their tea and smoking their long pipes; then a group of houses; then some shops; and then we were in the main street of Isfahan in a seething stream of carts, donkeys and camels, whose owners turned round to stare at the first jeep and the first British uniforms to make their appearance in Isfahan.

I drove to the British Consulate, where I was welcomed by the Consul, John Gault, with the same lavish hospitality that I have always met with at the hands of His Majesty's Consular Representa-

ves in Persia. Soon Duncan and I, in the time-honoured phrase of the British soldier, had 'our knees under the table', and were making good progress with a brace of the local brand of partridge and some delicious wine from the town of Shiraz, which, according to some, disputes with Xeres the honour of being the birthplace of sherry.

Over dinner I disclosed to my host, a robust-looking young man who gave the impression of being equally alert both mentally and physically, the true purpose of my visit. He was delighted. General Zahidi, though pleasant to meet, was, he said, a really bad lot: a bitter enemy of the Allies, a man of unpleasant personal habits, and, by virtue of his grain-hoarding activities, a source of popular discontent and an obstacle to the efficient administration of south Persia. He, too, had heard that he was plotting with the Germans and with the tribal leaders. Indeed, according to information which had reached him, one of the opening moves in General Zahidi's plot was to be the liquidation of the British Consul in Isfahan, a piece of news which completely outweighed all the General's personal charm, as far as he was concerned.

I asked Gault where Zahidi lived. He said he would show me, and after dinner we strolled out of the Consulate, across a narrow many-arched bridge, and along a broad avenue of plane trees, until we came to a massive pair of gates, set in a high stone wall and flanked by a sentry box and guardroom. Outside, a Persian infantryman was marching up and down while others, all well armed, slouched at the

oor of the guardroom. We took a turn round the ack premises, where the surrounding wall was pierced by another gate, guarded by another sentry. This was the General's residence. Then we continued our stroll along the avenue under the trees. A few hundred yards farther along we came to a large modern barracks, which according to Gault contained the greater part of the garrison of Isfahan, ready to rush to the assistance of their commander in case of trouble. It did not look as though a frontal attack by a small raiding party would have much chance of succeeding.

If Zahidi could not conveniently be winkled out of his place of residence, the obvious alternative was to ambush him when he was away from home, travelling from one point to another. I ascertained from Gault that at the same time every morning he crossed the bridge on his way to his headquarters. Would it not be possible to take advantage of the narrow bottleneck formed by this ancient monument to hold up his car, drag him out of it, and make off with him?

I gave this plan careful consideration, but there were two serious objections to it. In the first place Zahidi was reputed to go nowhere without a heavily armed bodyguard, whom it would be necessary to overcome by force. Secondly, even assuming that we managed to avoid a pitched battle with the bodyguard we were unlikely to succeed in kidnapping a genera in broad daylight in the middle of so populous a tow as Isfahan without attracting a good deal of attentior The two of us driving peaceably along in the jeep ha

been a sufficiently novel spectacle to hold up the traffic in the main street of Isfahan; the same party with the addition of a struggling general and his bereaved bodyguard could scarcely fail to introduce into the proceedings that very element of uproar which my superiors were so anxious to avoid. I went to sleep that night with the feeling that the problem before me was not as simple as it had at first sight appeared.

Next day, after further thought and another talk with Gault, I came to the conclusion that, unless I was prepared to risk a serious incident which might have unforseeable repercussions, I should have to rely primarily on some kind of a ruse in order to get my man. In short, what was needed was a Trojan horse.

Once I had started thinking on these lines, it was not long before a plan began to shape itself in my mind, which seemed to offer a better chance of neatly and successfully eliminating the source of the trouble without setting light to the powder-magazine of south Persia. That afternoon I sent off a cipher telegram to Teheran giving my proposals for 'Operation PONGO', which was the code-name I had chosen for the abduction of the General.

The first thing was to find a pretext for introducing myself into Zahidi's house. I suggested that I should be given authority to assume for the occasion a Brigadier's badges of rank; that I should then rin up the house and announce myself as a senior sta officer from Baghdad who wished to pay his respec to the General. If the latter agreed, I would dri up in a staff car, accompanied by Duncan and one

two other resourceful characters, hold him up at the point of the pistol, hustle him into the car, and drive away with him out of Isfahan before the alarm could be given. I also asked for a platoon of British infantry to lend a hand in case anything went wrong. I undertook to work out some means of introducing these into Isfahan, in such a way as to attract as *little* attention as possible.

Having sent off my telegram, I spent two agreeable days in Isfahan, making a detailed reconnaissance of the city, with special attention to the best line of withdrawal in case of an emergency, and at the same time enjoying its peerless beauty.

The arrival of an urgent message from G.H.Q. in reply to my telegram, submitting my proposals and *requesting instructions, brought* me back to the realities of the Second World War. My plan was approved in principle and I was instructed to go ahead with my preparations. Only one item of my highly unorthodox programme stuck in the throats of the well-trained staff officers at the other end. It was not (repeat: not) possible, they said, to authorize an officer of my age and seniority (I was a Captain) to masquerade, even for a day, as a Brigadier. [illegible]

asked to furnish the Brigadier and also such troops, equipment and transport as I might require.

I lost no time in reporting to Corps Headquarters, where I was provided with a platoon of Seaforth Highlanders, who were told that they had been specially selected for training in commando tactics. As surprise was clearly essential to the success of our enterprise, secrecy was of the utmost importance, and at this stage practically no one except the Corps Commander and myself was aware of our real objective. The Seaforths were equipped with tommy-guns and hand-grenades and we repaired to a secluded part of the desert near Qum to rehearse our act.

I had decided that the Seaforths should only be used in case of an emergency. My plan was that on the appointed day they should arrive in Isfahan in two covered trucks, disguised as far as possible to look like civilian vehicles, shortly before I set out for the General's house. One would draw up under the plane trees on the far side of the avenue, opposite the main entrance to the house, and stay there. The other would take up a position covering the back entrance. The men, clutching their tommy-guns and hand-grenades, would remain in the back of the trucks, out of sight. Only if they heard firing or a prearranged signal of three blasts on the whistle would they emerge from their hiding-place, overpower the guard and force an entrance, after whic their task would be to cover the withdrawal of th party in the staff car, which it was hoped wou include Zahidi whatever happened. If, on the oth hand, all went well, the two trucks would simp

wait until the staff car drove out with Zahidi in it, and then fall in behind and escort us out of Isfahan to a point in the desert where an aircraft would be waiting, ready to fly our prisoner out of the country.

For our rehearsals I chose a ruined fort in the desert. Again and again the two trucks took up their positions outside; the staff car drove in; the whistle sounded; the Seaforths poured out of the trucks and into the fort; an imaginary victim was bundled unceremoniously into the car, and all three vehicles drove off in triumph, the occupants tossing dummy hand-grenades out of the back at imaginary pursuers, as they went. The Seaforths gave a splendidly realistic performance. Indeed their enthusiasm was such that my only anxiety was lest on the day itself they would emerge from their place of concealment, whether things went well or badly, and massacre a number of harmless Persians out of sheer ebullience.

It now only remained to fix the day. This was done after a further exchange of signals with G.H.Q. Baghdad and with the Foreign Office via Teheran. I also extracted from the authorities, not without difficulty, permission to shoot General Zahidi, should he be armed and resist capture.

Our D-Day was fixed, and, on D minus one, we set out from Qum. I had decided that the Seaforths should spend the night well out of sight in the desert about ten miles from Isfahan. Next day, while the main party entered the town in the two trucks, smaller parties were detailed to cut the telegraph wires connecting Isfahan with the neighbouring Persian garrisons. Meanwhile I collected the

Brigadier, a distinguished officer whose well-developed sense of humour caused him to enter completely into the spirit of the somewhat equivocal role that had been allotted to him, and set out for the British Consulate.

On our arrival there a telephone call was put through to the General's house and an appointment duly made for the same afternoon. After a copious lunch we took our places in the staff car which was flying a large Union Jack. A reliable N.C.O., armed to the teeth, occupied the seat next the driver, while Guardsman Duncan and a Seaforth Highlander, both carrying tommy-guns, crouched in the luggage compartment at the back, under a tarpaulin. Gault followed in his own car. As we approached Zahidi's house I was relieved to see our two trucks, their tarpaulin covers concealing the battle-hungry Seaforths, drawn up in their appointed places. At the gate the Persian sentry was deep in conversation with Laurence Lockhard, a Persian linguist from the R.A.F. Intelligence, whose services I had enlisted for the occasion. So far everything had gone according to plan.

On our appearance, the sentry at the gate reluctantly put out the cigarette which Lockhard had given him, broke off his conversation, and presented arms. We drove on up the drive and drew up in front of the house immediately outside a large pai of open French windows. A servant ushered us i through these and went off to fetch the General.

When, a couple of minutes later, General Zahid a dapper figure in a tight-fitting grey uniform ar

highly polished boots, entered the room, he found himself looking down the barrel of my Colt automatic. There was no advantage in prolonging a scene which might easily become embarrassing. Without further ado, I invited the General to put his hands up and informed him that I had instructions to arrest him and that, if he made any noise or attempt at resistance, he would be shot. Then I took away his pistol and hustled him through the window into the car which was waiting outside with the engine running. To my relief there was no sign of the much-advertised bodyguard. As we passed the guardroom, the sentry once again interrupted his conversation to present arms, and the General, sitting bolt upright, with my pistol pressed against his ribs and Duncan breathing menacingly down his neck, duly returned the salute. The two ' plain vans ', with their occupants now bitterly disappointed, fell in behind; and the whole convoy swept at a brisk pace over the bridge and into the main avenue leading out of Isfahan.

Some miles outside the town we passed a large barracks, full of General Zahidi's troops, but the telephone wire from the town had duly been cut by the wire-cutting party, and there was no sign of the alarm having been given. Meanwhile Zahidi continued to sit bolt upright and to assure me that there was a very good explanation of any aspects of his conduct which might at first sight have seemed at all suspicious. Soon we reached the point in the desert where we had spent the night and here I handed over my captive to an officer and six men who were stand-

ing by to take him by car to the nearest landing-ground where an aeroplane was waiting to fly him to Palestine. This was the last I saw of General Zahidi, but, reading my newspaper recently, nearly five years after his ' liquidation ', I was amused to see an announcement that he had returned to Persia and once again been placed in command of the south Persian military district.

CAROLA OMAN

NELSON

Introductory Note

Miss Carola Oman, the daughter of a distinguished historian, published her biography of Nelson in 1947—a work in the grand style and one which is likely to be the standard authority on the Admiral for some time. Previous to this publication, the only long work of real merit on Nelson was Southey's *Life*, and that was written only a few years after Trafalgar.

By the year of Trafalgar (1805) Nelson already had some thirty-five years' service in the Navy, which he had entered at the age of twelve. His early career was only a little more distinguished than that of many young officers of his day, for he was much dogged by ill health; indeed for six years in his early thirties he was unemployed and landbound in his father's Norfolk home. The outbreak of war against France in 1793, however, led to a naval expansion and more opportunity for naval officers. Nelson was at once given command of a 64-gun ship of the line *Agamemnon*, and set sail for the Mediterranean.

Under the command of Jervis—a most vigorous leader—Nelson played an important part in the victory of St. Vincent for which he was promoted Rear-Admiral and made a Knight of the Bath. His reputation was enhanced by the victories of the Nile

and of Copenhagen, and in May 1803, he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean, where for two years he kept watch on Toulon under very adverse conditions.

Early in 1805, Napoleon set on foot a scheme for the invasion of England. First, he had to gain control of the Channel in order that his soldiers might be safely escorted to the invasion beaches. He therefore ordered French and Spanish ships to collect in the West Indies (well clear, it was hoped, from interference), whence they would return to Europe in strength, force a way up the Channel and cover the landings. This plan never began to be successful, for only one French fleet—that of Villeneuve—reached the West Indies, and even then it was under hot pursuit by Nelson. The chase continued throughout the summer and early autumn of 1805, reaching a climax at the battle of Trafalgar on October 21st.

Nelson has left much more behind him than the memory of great victories and a host of statues and monuments. He has left a tradition. 'There seems to be something the matter with our ships to-day,' said Beatty on the bridge of his flagship; and he made the signal—*Keep closer to the enemy*. There was the Nelson touch again in evidence.

ENGLAND EXPECTS

With the approach of noon, bands struck up on board the ships of the two British columns, rolling gently towards the enemy, and the first sunlight of the day broke through, picking up, according to eye-witnesses, ' in a beautiful manner ', a forest of masts with black hoops, and the freshly painted sides of a crescent-shaped formation of scarlet, black and yellow French and Spanish ships-of-the-line, which seemed to include a formidable number of three-deckers, amongst which Nelson's ' old acquaintance ', the *Santissima Trinidad*, glowing in vermilion and white, with a dazzlingly white figurehead, was prominent. A Second Lieutenant of Marines, sent below with orders in the *Ajax*, was surprised by the sang-froid of the bluejackets. Nearly all had stripped to the waist and bound their handkerchiefs round their heads. A number were performing an elaborate horn-pipe to the strains of the martial music which had just struck up. Veterans, engaged in sharpening their cutlasses or polishing their guns, as if an inspection instead of an action was momentarily expected, broke off occasionally to take a look out of the yawning gun-ports and differ as to the identity and previous records of the ships which they were about to engage. Someone remarked that this lot would make a fine sight as prizes at Spithead.

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'Britons Strike Home', Nelson had asked Blackwood whether he did not think there was one more general signal wanting, adding: 'I'll now amuse the Fleet'. His conversation with his Signal Lieutenant had been, 'Mr. Pasco, I wish to say to the Fleet, *England confides that every man will do his duty*. You must be quick, for I have one more signal to make, which is for close action.' Pasco begged leave to suggest the substitution of 'expects' for 'confides', as the first word was in the Signal Book and would save seven hoists, and to this the Admiral agreed. ('That will do; make it directly.') The response throughout the fleet, as the message passed down both lines, was, according to Blackwood, 'truly sublime'; another witness says that 'it was received with three cheers in every ship'. 'Number 16', the signal for close action, followed, and remained at the top-gallant masthead of the *Victory* until it was shot away. The log of Blackwood's frigate shows that it was preceded, by four minutes, by an order to be prepared to anchor after the close of the action. Nelson had foreseen the probability of a storm, and was anxious for the safety of his ships on a lee shore.

The *Royal Sovereign*, sailing well with her new copper, was in advance of her line, and rapidly closing with the enemy. Nelson struck his thigh and exclaimed, 'See how that noble fellow Collingwoo carries his ship into action!' and these were the las recorded words spoken by him without the back ground of gunfire, for by 11.40 Collingwood wa under direct fire of the huge, swarthy *Santa Ana* ar the French *Fougueux*, and partially under that of fo

and in possession of twenty prizes. But the young officer went over the *Victory's* side 'with a heart very sad', shocked by the words, clearly heard, 'God bless you, Blackwood; I shall never speak to you again.'

The enemy found the range of the *Victory* with their sixth shot, which went through her main top-gallant sail. After a short silence, as concertedly as if by signal, seven or eight enemy ships of the enemy van then poured in their broadsides. A round-shot, flying across the quarter-deck of the *Victory*, almost tore in two a figure engaged in conversation with Hardy. Captain Adair of the Marines called up a seaman to cast overboard, without delay, the fragmented corpse of the Admiral's official secretary, but Nelson had noticed. 'Is that poor Scott?' Mr. Whipple, Captain's clerk, who undertook the secretary's duties, was killed by blast a few moments later.

As firing became general, and clouds of smoke enveloped the scene, the wind died to a mere breath. Still the *Victory*, sustaining 'such a fire as had scarcely before been directed at a single ship', without being able to bring her own guns to bear in reply, hel steadily on her course. Her mizzen-topmast was sh away about two-thirds up; her sails were so riddled. As usual, the French were aiming at ma and rigging. Seeing that a group of marines dra up on the poop were suffering, Nelson ordered A to disperse his men around the ship. The next most serious loss yet was that the *Victory's* whee knocked to pieces. But the tiller was quickly ma and she was thereafter steered from the gun

'The First Lieutenant, John Quilliam and Master, Thomas Atkinson, relieving each other at this duty'. A shot, penetrating the thickness of four hammocks in the nettings, hit the forebrace bitts on the quarter-deck. The pacing Admiral and his Flag-Captain halted, and were observed to look one another up and down with a question in the eye. But the only casualty was *the buckle of Hardy's left shoe. Nelson smilingly commented,* 'This is too warm work to last long', and as he resumed his march, said that never had he witnessed *anything cooler than the conduct of the Victory's ship's company.* The period of waiting, inactive, while advancing slowly under a raking fire, lasted probably about twenty minutes: then he gave the order to port the helm. His feint of attacking the van, so that Collingwood should be 'as little interrupted as is possible', had served its purpose. The *Victory* opened fire with her larboard guns, 'in a determined, cool and steady manner', as she hauled to starboard. She passed under the stern of a French three-decker, and fired into the cabin windows of the *Bucentaure*, first her forecastle carronade, and then, as she moved slowly ahead, a double-shotted broadside. Acrid smoke puffed back into the *Victory's* gun-ports, filling her lower decks, and a cloud of black dust and a shower of splinters descended upon her quarter-deck. Every glass there had long been scanning the enemy line in the fruitless attempt to discover the flag of the French Commander-in-Chief. The ship into which she had delivered her first, fatally-disabling counterstroke had, in fact, been Villeneuve's flag-ship, but close behind the *Bucentaure* lay the French

80-gun *Neptune*, and astern of her a French 74 in the act of ranging up. Hardy had gravely reported his regret that it would not be possible to cut through this line, 'closed like a forest', without running on board one ship or the other. 'I can't help it', had been Nelson's reply. 'It does not signify which we run on board of—take your choice', whereupon Hardy had chosen the *Redoutable*. After the collision the *Victory* fell away at the rebound, but her yard-arm caught in the *Redoutable's* rigging, and the two ships hung together and so remained, locked in a death-grip, moving slowly before the wind to the S.S.E. While the *Victory's* starboard guns smashed in the *Redoutable's* sides, and her port guns continued to attack the *Santissima Trinidad*, lying ahead of the *Bucentaure*, men from the *Redoutable's* three tops attempted, with a deluge of langridge, musket-balls and hand-grenades, to clear the *Victory's* upper decks, and, under cover, a French boarding-party made ready.

Nelson had always been averse from the employment of small arms, or accumulation of explosives aloft, believing the danger of setting light to the sails to be greater than any possible gain, and the *Victory* had no guns mounted in her poop. The mizzen-mast of the *Redoutable*, a much smaller ship, rose midway between the *Victory's* mizzen and main, and the crouching Frenchmen, rising breast-high to fire, had the English Commander-in-Chief's quarter-deck not forty-five feet distant and immediately below them, though the lurching of both ships in the swell made accurate aim very difficult. At the *Victory's*

last refit Nelson had ordered a large skylight over his cabin to be removed and the space planked over, so as to give him more room amidships. Here, clear of the ropes and guns, in the centre of his quarter-deck, he had a walk twenty-one feet long, from the wheel to the hatch-ladder leading to his cabin. At about 1.35, Hardy, who had turned at the wheel, and was advancing towards the hatchway, realised that he had taken the last step in that direction alone. Facing about, he saw the Admiral on his knees, with the finger-tips of his left hand just touching the deck. The single arm gave way, and Nelson fell on his left side, exactly on the spot where his secretary had been killed an hour earlier. Sergeant-major Secker of the Marines and two seamen were there in a moment, raising him. As Hardy bent, he saw a smile, and heard the words, 'Hardy, I believe they have done it at last,' or 'They have done for me at last.' The large, consternated man muttered, 'I hope not,' but the reply was, 'Yes, my backbone is shot through.'



DEATH OF AN ADMIRAL

The scene had now assumed the appearance made familiar to succeeding generations by the artist Devis, who came out to meet the *Victory* on her homeward passage, and stayed three weeks in her, making his sketches from life and upon the spot. On the left of the picture stood Lieutenant Yule and Mr. Midshipman Collingwood, their British bulk and com-

exions contrasting with those of the Admiral's
izened, whiskered Neapolitan valet. Dr. Scott, his
anging features fixed in a tragic mask, continued his
office of 'most tender nurse', gently rubbing any
part of his master's body in which he admitted of
pain. The arm of Burke (a man in his sixty-seventh
year, who had been thirty years afloat) still propped
the pillows. Hardy loomed above the group, looking
down. The efficient steward, Chevalier, recom-
mended by Davison, put a question to the kneeling
Chief Surgeon. Beyond them crouched Lieutenant
Bligh, dazed by a head-wound, and Neil Smith,
Assistant Surgeon, at work. At a respectful distance,
in the deepest shadow, hat in hand, lingered a bowed,
homely, elderly figure, Mr. Bunce, Carpenter of the
Victory, acclaimed by her master 'an invaluable
man'.

Hardy's last interview with Nelson was noted by
Beatty as occupying not more than eight minutes.
As before, a formal handshake opened the dialogue,
but this time a man of few words and no graces kept
hold of the hand of a hero while he announced that
he was come to congratulate him, even in the arms
of death, 'on a brilliant victory, which is complete'.
Hardy could not say for certain how many of the
enemy were captured, as it was not yet possible for
anyone to make out every ship distinctly. He could
answer for fourteen or fifteen.

The reply was, 'That is well, but I bargained for
twenty', and then, with an access of energy, the
order was given, 'Anchor, Hardy, anchor'. The
Flag-Captain of a dying Commander-in-Chief hesi-

tly supposed that his Second would now take on himself the direction of affairs, but such a ggestion brought Nelson almost upright in the ms of his attendants. 'Not while I live, I hope!' ropping back, he ordered, 'No, do you anchor, Hardy.'

'Shall we make the signal, sir?' asked the Flag-Captain, and was told, 'Yes, for if I live, I'll anchor.'

But he believed that he had only a few minutes more left, and his gaze pitifully outrunning his speech, he mentioned next:

'Don't throw me overboard, Hardy.'

'Oh, no, certainly not,' was the wretched answer.

The Scottish Chief Surgeon was amongst them, taking notes, and his decorous record approached a Biblical cadence.

'Then,' replied his Lordship, 'you know what to do. And take care of my dear Lady Hamilton, Hardy. Take care of poor Lady Hamilton. Kiss me, Hardy.'

The Captain now knelt down and kissed his cheek, when his Lordship said: 'Now I am satisfied; thank God, I have done my duty.'

Captain Hardy stood a minute or two in silent contemplation. He knelt down again, and kissed his Lordship's forehead.

His Lordship said, 'Who is that?'

The Captain answered: 'It is Hardy,' to which his Lordship replied, 'God bless you, Hardy!'

He spoke very little more after Hardy's second ithdrawal, and articulated with difficulty the orders

for, 'Fan—fan' or 'Rub—rub'. The *Victory* had ceased to fire some time past, and within the next few minutes even distant gunfire died away. When his valet turned him, at his request, upon his right side, he whispered breathlessly, 'I wish I had not left the deck,' and presently, to Scott, 'I have not been a great sinner, doctor,' followed by 'Remember that I leave Lady Hamilton and my Daughter as a legacy to my Country—never forget Horatia.'

Beatty, returning at increasingly short intervals, found him, upon a first inspection, whispering with evidently failing strength, 'Thank God, I have done my duty,' and upon the next, speechless, and with no discernible pulse at the wrist. At 4.30, about three hours after the Admiral had been hit, his steward, tiptoeing in search of the Chief Surgeon with the noiseless speed and speaking gesture of his calling, indicated something which brought that officer back with him quickly. They had to touch the shoulder of his lordship's private secretary, who was still mechanically chafing a cold breast.

A. G. MACDONELL

ENGLAND, THEIR ENGLAND

Introductory Note

Few modern books have revealed the English character with such accuracy and good humour as A. G. Macdonell's *England, their England.* He tells the story of *young* Donald Cameron, a Scotsman, who decides to write a book about the curious habits and customs of the Sassenach. Armed with letters of introduction, Donald travels about meeting people and undergoing such experiences as a country-house week-end, an international conference and a twelve-a-side village cricket match as described in this extract. The book is an example of satire at its best—*funny*, discerning and tolerant.

A. G. Macdonell was educated at Winchester, and became a drama critic after the First World War. *England, their England* was published in 1933, and was an immediate success. Macdonell was beginning to make a reputation as a broadcaster when he died suddenly in 1941 at the age of forty-six.

THE CRICKET MATCH

ter a suitable interval for refreshment, Mr. Hodge d his men, except Mr. Harcourt who was missing, ut into the field and placed them at suitable positions n the hay.

The batsmen came in. The redoubtable Major Hawker, the fast bowler, thrust out his chin and prepared to bowl. In a quarter of an hour he had terrified seven batsmen, clean bowled six of them, and broken a stump. Eleven runs, six wickets, last man two.

After the fall of the sixth wicket there was slight delay. The new batsman, the local rate collector, had arrived at the crease and was ready. But nothing happened. Suddenly the large publisher, who was acting as wicket-keeper, called out, 'Hi! Where's Hawker?'

The words galvanized Mr. Hodge into portentous activity.

'Quick!' he shouted. 'Hurry, run, for God's sake! Bob, George, Percy, to the Shoes!' and he set off at a sort of gallop towards the inn, followed at intervals by the rest of the side except the pretty youth in the blue jumper, who lay down; the wicket-keeper, who did not move; and Mr. Shakespeare Pollock, who had shot off the mark and was well ahead of the field.

But they were all too late, even Mr. Pollock. The gallant Major, admitted by Mr. Bason through the

ack door, had already lowered a quart and a half of nild-and-bitter, and his subsequent bowling was perfectly innocuous, consisting, as it did, mainly of slow, gentle full-pitches to leg which the village baker and even, occasionally, the rate-collector hit hard and high into the long grass. The score mounted steadily.

Disaster followed disaster. Mr. Pollock, presented with an easy chance of a run-out, instead of lobbing the ball back to the wicket-keeper, had another reversion to his college days and flung it with appalling velocity at the unfortunate rate-collector and hit him in the small of the back, shouting triumphantly as he did so, 'Rah, rah, rah!' Mr. Livingstone, good club player, missed two easy catches off successive balls. Mr. Hodge allowed another easy catch to fall at his feet without attempting to catch it, and explained afterwards that he had been all the time admiring a particularly fine specimen of oak in the squire's garden. He seemed to think that this was a complete justification of his failure to attempt, let alone bring off, the catch. A black spot happened to cross the eye of the ancient umpire just as the baker put all his feet and legs and pads in front of a perfectly straight ball, and, as he plaintively remarked over and over again, he had to give the batsman the benefit of the doubt, hadn't he? It wasn't as if it was his fault that a black spot had crossed his eye just at that moment. And the stout publisher seemed to be suffering from the delusion that the way to make a catch at the wicket was to raise both hands high in the air, utter ...ing yell, and trust to an immense pair of pads

to secure the ball. Repeated experiments proved that he was wrong.

The baker lashed away vigorously and the rate-collector dabbed the ball hither and thither until the score—having once been eleven runs for six wickets—was marked up on the board at fifty runs for six wickets. Things were desperate. Twenty to win and five wickets—assuming that the blacksmith's ankle and third-slip's knee-cap would stand the strain—to fall. If the lines on Mr. Hodge's face were deep, the lines on the faces of his team when he put himself on to bowl were like plasticine models of the Colorado Canyon. Mr. Southcott, without any orders from his captain, discarded his silk sweater from the Rue de la Paix, and went away into the deep field, about a hundred and twenty yards from the wicket. His beautifully brushed head was hardly visible above the daisies. The professor of ballistics sighed deeply. Major Hawker grinned a colossal grin, right across his jolly red face, and edged off in the direction of the Shoes. Livingstone, loyal to his captain, crouched alertly. Mr. Shakespeare Pollock rushed about enthusiastically. The remainder of the team drooped.

But the remainder of the team was wrong. For a wicket, a crucial wicket, was secured off Mr. Hodge's very first ball. It happened like this. Mr. Hodge was a poet, and therefore a theorist, and an idealist. If h was to win a victory at anything, he preferred to wi by brains and not by muscle. He would far soon have his best leg-spinner miss the wicket by an eigh of an inch than dismiss a batsman with a fast, clum full-toss. Every ball that he bowled had brain behi

it, if not exactness of pitch. And it so happened that he had recently watched a county cricket match between Lancashire, a county that he detested in theory, and Worcestershire, a county that he adored in fact. On the one side were factories and the late Mr. Jimmy White; on the other, English apples and Mr. Stanley Baldwin. And at this particular match, a Worcestershire bowler, by name Root, a deliciously agricultural name, had outed the tough nuts of the County Palatine by placing all his fieldsmen on the leg-side and bowling what are technically known as 'in-swingers'.

Mr. Hodge, at heart an agrarian, for all his book-learning and his cadences, was determined to do the same. The first part of the performance was easy. He placed all his men upon the leg-side. The second part—the bowling of the 'in-swingers'—was more complicated, and Mr. Hodge's first ball was a slow long-hop on the off-side. The rate-collector, metaphorically rubbing his eyes, felt that this was too good to be true, and he struck the ball sharply into the untenanted off-side and ambled down the wicket with as near an approach to gaiety as a man can achieve who is cut off by the very nature of his profession from the companionship and goodwill of his fellows. He had hardly gone a yard or two when he was paralysed by a hideous yell from the long grass into which the ball had vanished, and still more by the sight of Mr. Harcourt, who, aroused from a deep slumber amid a comfortable couch of grasses and daisies, sprang to his feet and, pulling himself together with miraculous rapidity after a lightning if some

what bleary glance round the field, seized the ball and unerringly threw it down the wicket. Fifty for seven, last man twenty-two. Twenty to win: four wickets to fall.

Mr. Hodge's next ball was his top-spinner, and it would have, or might have, come very quickly off the ground had it ever hit the ground; as it was, one of the short-legs caught it dexterously and threw it back while the umpire signalled a wide. Mr. Hodge then tried some more of Mr. Root's stuff and was promptly hit for two sixes and a single. This brought the redoubtable baker to the batting end. Six runs to win and four wickets to fall.

Mr. Hodge's fifth ball was not a good one, due mainly to the fact that it slipped out of his hand before he was ready, and it went up and came down in a slow, lazy parabola, about seven feet wide of the wicket on the leg-side. The baker had plenty of time to make up his mind. He could either leave it alone and let it count one run as a wide; or he could spring upon it like a panther and, with a terrific six, finish the match sensationally. He could play the part either of a Quintus Fabius Maximus Cunctator, or of a sort of Tarzan. The baker concealed beneath a modest and floury exterior a mounting ambition. Here was his chance to show the village. He chose the sort of Tarzan, sprang like a panther, whirled his bat cyclonically, and missed the ball by about a foot and a half. The wicket-keeping publisher had also had time in which to think and to move, and he also had covered the seven feet. True, his movements were less like the spring of a panther than the sid

ways waddle of an aldermanic penguin. But nevertheless he got there, and when the ball had passed the flashing blade of the baker, he launched a mighty kick at it—stopping to grab it was out of the question—and by an amazing fluke kicked it on to the wicket. Even the ancient umpire had to give the baker out, for the baker was still lying flat on his face outside the crease.

'I was bowling for that,' observed Mr. Hodge modestly, strolling up the pitch.

'I had plenty of time to use my hands,' remarked the wicket-keeper to the world at large, 'but I preferred to kick it.'

Donald was impressed by the extraordinary subtlety of the game.

Six to win and three wickets to fall.

The next batsman was a schoolboy of about sixteen, an ingenuous youth with pink cheeks and a nervous smile, who quickly fell a victim to Mr. Harcourt, now wideawake and beaming upon everyone. For Mr. Harcourt, poet that he was, understood exactly what the poor, pink child was feeling, and he knew that if he played the ancient dodge and pretended to lose the ball in the long grass, it was a hundred to one that the lad would lose his head. The batsman at the other end played the fourth ball of Mr. Livingstone's next over hard in the direction of Mr. Harcourt. Mr. Harcourt rushed towards the spot where it had vanished in the jungle. He groped wildly for it, shouting as he did so, 'Come and help. It's lost.' The pink child scuttled nimbly down the pitch. Six runs to win and two wickets to fall. Mr. Harcourt smiled demoniacally.

The crisis was now desperate. The fieldsmen drew nearer and nearer to the batsmen, excepting the youth in the blue jumper. Livingstone balanced himself on his toes. Mr. Shakespeare Pollock hopped about almost on top of the batsmen, and breathed excitedly and audibly. Even the imperturbable Mr. Southcott discarded the piece of grass which he had been chewing so steadily. Mr. Hodge took himself off and put on the Major, who had by now somewhat lived down the quart and a half.

The batsmen crouched down upon their bats and defended stubbornly. A snick through the slips brought a single. A ball which eluded the publisher's gigantic pads brought a bye. A desperate sweep at a straight half-volley sent the ball off the edge of the bat over third-man's head and in normal circumstances would have certainly scored one, and possibly two. But Mr. Harcourt was on guard at third-man, and the batsmen, by nature cautious men, one being old and the sexton, the other the postman and therefore a Government official, were taking no risks. Then came another single off a mis-hit, and then an interminable period in which no wicket fell and no run was scored. It was broken at last disastrously, for the postman struck the ball sharply at Mr. Pollock, and Mr. Pollock picked it up and, in an ecstasy o zeal, flung it madly at the wicket. Two overthrow resulted.

The scores were level and there were two wicke to fall. Silence fell. The gaffers, victims simu taneously of excitement and senility, could har raise their pint pots—for it was past 6 o'clock, a

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ran with his head thrown back and his eyes goggling at the hawk-like cricket-ball. And this in itself would not have mattered if it had not been for the fact that the blacksmith and the baker, also very naturally, ran with their heads turned not only upwards but also backwards as well, so that they too gazed at the ball, with an alarming sort of squint and a truly terrific kink in their necks. Half-way down the pitch the three met with a magnificent clang, reminiscent of early, happy days in the tournament-ring at Ashby-de-la-Zouche, and the hopes of the village fell with the resounding fall of their three champions.

But what of the fielding side? Things were not so well with them. If there was doubt and confusion among the warriors of Fordenden, there was also uncertainty and disorganization among the ranks of the invaders. Their main trouble was the excessive concentration of their forces in the neighbourhood of the wicket. Napoleon laid it down that it was impossible to have too many men upon a battlefield, and he used to do everything in his power to call up every available man for a battle. Mr. Hodge, after a swift glance at the ascending ball and a swift glance at the disposition of his troops, disagreed profoundly with the Emperor's dictum. He had too many men, far too many. And all except the youth in the blue silk jumper, and the mighty Boone, were moving towards strategical positions underneath the ball, and not one of them appeared to be aware that any of the others existed. Boone had not moved because he was more or less in the right place, but then

'Blast the side,' said Boone.

Donald went back to his place.

The scores were level and there was one wicket to fall. The last man in was the blacksmith, leaning heavily upon the shoulder of the baker, who was going to run for him, and limping as if in great pain. He took guard and looked round savagely. He was clearly still in a great rage.

The first ball he received he lashed at wildly and hit straight up into the air to an enormous height. It went up and up and up, until it became difficult to focus it properly against the deep, cloudless blue of the sky, and it carried with it the hopes and fears of an English village. Up and up it went and then at the top it seemed to hang motionless in the air, poised like a hawk, fighting, as it were, a heroic but forlorn battle against the chief invention of Sir Isaac Newton, and then it began its slow descent.

In the meanwhile things were happening below, on the terrestrial sphere. Indeed, the situation was rapidly becoming what the French call *mouvementé*. In the first place, the blacksmith forgot his sprained ankle and set out at a capital rate for the other end, roaring in a great voice as he went, 'Come on, Joe!' The baker, who was running on behalf of the invalid, also set out, and he also roared 'Come on, Joe!' and side by side, like a pair of high-stepping hackneys, the pair cantered along. From the other end Joe se out on his mission, and he roared 'Come on, Bill! So all three came on. And everything would hav been all right, so far as the running was concerne had it not been for the fact that Joe, very naturall

ran with his head thrown back and his eyes goggling at the hawk-like cricket-ball. And this in itself would not have mattered if it had not been for the fact that the blacksmith and the baker, also very naturally, ran with their heads turned not only upwards but also backwards as well, so that they too gazed at the ball, with an alarming sort of squint and a truly terrific kink in their necks. Half-way down the pitch the three met with a magnificent clang, reminiscent of early, happy days in the tournament-ring at Ashby-de-la-Zouche, and the hopes of the village fell with the resounding fall of their three champions.

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Boone was not likely to bring off the catch, es
after the episode of the last ball. Major H
shouting 'Mine, mine!' in a magnificent
confident voice, was coming up from the b
end like a battle cruiser. Mr. Harcourt had ol
lost sight of the ball altogether, if indeed he h
seen it, for he was running round and round
and giggling foolishly. Livingstone and Southc
two cracks, were approaching competently.
of them would catch it easily. Mr. Hodge h
to choose between them and, coming to
decision, he yelled above the din, 'Yours,
stone!' Southcott, disciplined cricketer, s
dead. Then Mr. Hodge made a fatal mistak
remembered Livingstone's two missed sitters,
reversed his decision and roared 'Yours, B
Mr. Southcott obediently started again, while
stone, who had not heard the second order
straight on. Captain Hodge had restored the sta

In the meantime the professor of ballisti
made a lightning calculation of angles, vel
density of the air, barometer-readings and te
tures, and had arrived at the conclusion t
critical point, the spot which ought to be ma
the photographs with an X, was one yard
north-east of Boone, and he proceeded to
station here, colliding on the way with Don
knocking him over. A moment later Bobby So
came racing up and tripped over the rec
Donald and was shot head first into the Abral
bosom of Boone. Boone stepped back a yar
the impact and came down with his spiked b

mounted by a good eighteen stone of flesh and blood, upon the professor's toe. Almost simultaneously the portly wicket-keeper, whose movements were a positive triumph of the spirit over the body, bumped the professor from behind. The learned man was thus neatly sandwiched between Tweedledum and Tweedledee, and the sandwich was instantly converted into a ragout by Livingstone, who made up for his lack of extra weight—for he was always in perfect training—by his extra momentum. And all the time Mr. Shakespeare Pollock hovered alertly upon the outskirts like a Rugby scrum-half, screaming American University cries in a piercing high tenor voice.

At last the ball came down. To Mr. Hodge it seemed a long time before the invention of Sir Isaac Newton finally triumphed. And it was a striking testimony to the mathematical and ballistical skill of the professor that the ball landed with a sharp report upon the top of his head. Thence it leapt up into the air a foot or so, cannoned on to Boone's head, and then trickled slowly down the colossal expanse of the wicket-keeper's back, bouncing slightly as it reached the massive lower portions. It was only a foot from the ground when Mr. Shakespeare Pollock sprang into the vortex with a last ear-splitting howl of victory and grabbed it off the seat of the wicket-keeper's trousers. The match was a tie. And hardly anyone on the field knew it except Mr. Hodge, the youth in the blue jumper and Mr. Pollock himself. For the two batsmen and the runner, undaunted to the last, had picked themselves up and were bent on

completing the single that was to give Fordenden the crown of victory. Unfortunately, dazed with their falls, with excitement, and with the noise, they all three ran for the same wicket, simultaneously realized their error, and all three turned and ran for the other—the blacksmith, ankle and all, in the centre and leading by a yard, so that they looked like pictures of the Russian troika. But their effort was in vain, for Mr. Pollock had grabbed the ball and the match was a tie.

And both teams spent the evening at the Three Horseshoes, and Mr. Harcourt made a speech in Italian about the glories of England and afterwards fell asleep in a corner, and Donald got home to Royal Avenue at 1 o'clock in the morning, feeling that he had not learnt very much about the English from his experience of their national game.

A. P. HERBERT

INDEPENDENT MEMBER

Introductory Note

Were a competition to be held for the readiest wit of the day, A. P. Herbert would certainly be very high up in the final list. In the House of Commons, on the river or the tennis-court, at Oxford University or the National Maritime Museum—indeed wherever he chooses to set foot—A. P. H. is a striking figure. His book *Independent Member* reflects the wide range of his knowledge and interests. It is a collection of reminiscences covering the fifteen years from 1934 to 1949—the period, in fact, during which he was M.P. for Oxford University. His wit must have done much to enliven debates in the House; the University, certainly, was well content with its member, leaving him at Westminster until such time as the Government chose to abolish the University seats.

Few men are better known on the Thames than A. P. H.—none, certainly, can write of the Lower Reaches with quite the same affection and sense of atmosphere. He already knew the London river intimately in 1939, and it was very right and proper that he and his boat, the *Water Gipsy*, should go into service together on the Naval Auxiliary Patrol. Much of the book *Independent Member* tells of his war experiences—in the blitz, in Newfoundland, in

Normandy or simply on routine patrol up and down the river. It is a vigorous, stimulating record.

A. P. H. has written a great deal: he is frequently to be read in Punch. The extent of his output has ranged from novels to a book on English words. He is also a man of the theatre, having been associated with Vivian Ellis in various musical plays, of which Bless the Bride was perhaps the most successful.

TORTURE CHAMBER

I suppose there are some folk who enjoy speaking in the House of Commons, and rise without a doubt or tremor. It is impossible to tell: for everyone must leap to his feet with the same alacrity if he is to 'catch the eye', even though he feels like Mr John Bright: 'I suppose I ought to be ashamed of myself, but the fact is I never rise in the House without a trembling at the knees and a secret wi that somebody else would catch the Speaker's e and enable me to sit down again.' John Bright h no cause to be ashamed of himself: for the eviden is plentiful that the House of Commons has a f midable quality all its own.

Though the 'maiden' be safely passed, the gho not laid. Not long before he died, Sir Austen Cl berlain, to whom the whole House listened respect, said to me: 'I never rise in the H without a sinking feeling in the pit of my stom He showed me the single sheet of notepaper on

were the 'notes' for a delightful speech he had just delivered. Something, I forget what, was written in large capitals across the middle. I said, 'But you didn't say anything about that, Sir?' 'No,' said the Elder Statesman, sadly, 'it was the one thing I wanted to say. So I wrote it large like that. But you know how it is. I forgot.'

What hope, then, for the smaller fry? I would not, myself, go quite as far as John Bright; for, once I have stood up, I am eager to be 'called' soon and get it over. But I still dislike the whole business as much as ever.

I have perhaps had more than my fair share of attention and laughter. I can remember a few occasions when I seemed to have the House really with me and felt I was doing pretty well, and a very few when I did almost 'enjoy myself', as kind friends said afterwards. But nearly always I have had the same feeling of unease and unreality. I am thinking:

> Is this really me standing up here and talking this nonsense? Must I go on with it? Why don't I sit down? Am I dropping my voice? Can they hear me in the gallery? I am not finishing my sentences well. I have left out one of the main things I meant to say, but it is too late to go back now. What are they muttering about on the Front Bench? How am I going to end? Is this really me?

I am two persons, one the dashing centre-forward, and the other a most discontented manager on the side-line.

There is, of course, almost every possible ingredient of unease in that place. An after-dinner speaker or a platform speaker may reasonably expect to have the attention of most of his audience. They are in front of him, and they cannot easily get away. He has a table, or desk, for his notes and papers. Even the 'front-bencher' commands the length of the House and can use the Dispatch Box for his notes and papers—and thumping fist, if necessary. He has a fort: he has a field of fire. The back-bencher, clutching his notes, is like a lonely man standing up in the middle of a public meeting. His audience is all round him, some in front, some behind, some above him, some below—and a great many high up in galleries in a building not highly meritorious for 'acoustics'. An interruption, a sneer, an ironical laugh may hit him from any quarter. And, if he rounds upon the interrupter to the south-west, or the sneerer to the east, he may be reminded that he must address his remarks to the Chair, which lies north. More, unless he is very good, or fairl important—and even if he is—his audience is movin and changing all the time. Members, good friend it may be, receive urgent telephone messages o 'green cards', bow to the Speaker, and march o as he approaches his principal, or only, joke. T Minister whom he hopes to convert, or intends shatter with a deadly jest, is relieved by anot Minister and goes out for a cup of tea, just bef the unanswerable argument or the crushing qui reached. The Front Opposition Bench, in the sa way, are constantly coming and going. There

procession of Members to the Table, putting down Questions and getting advice from the Clerks. Others go up to the Speaker and engage him in conversation. There is movement everywhere. It is like making a speech in a beehive. And those who remain motionless are not necessarily attentive, or even silent. Ministers and Whips must confer upon the course of the debate, check facts and figures, read documents about something quite different. A Member will come in with a resolution or an amendment to another Bill, to which he is seeking signatures. He goes from friend to friend, and there is a whispered colloquy with each. All this is quite legitimate. Then there will be a few couples having private conversations about their holiday plans, about the party meeting, about the latest scandal, or the by-election, or the pretty girl in the Speaker's Gallery. Behind the orator may be one of those Members who have the habit of muttering a running commentary—' Quite right, too '—' Not with this Government '—' They're afraid '—quite friendly, maybe, but maddening. Then there are the professional interrupters, who, if they do not like the speaker or the speech, make it their business to snap at him from time to time—' Nonsense!' ' Rubbish!' ' What about 1926?' ' All very well for you!' and so on. But these may be an advantage to the speaker since they revive the languishing interest of others. Then there is the formal interruption. No two Members may be on their feet at the same time: but at any moment a Member, half-rising, with his rump just airborne, may say: ' May I—?' or ' If I may—?' The speaker is not bound to ' give way ' and sit

staff, the tiger, said: 'Why don't we stay round here and fire on the —s when they come back and bomb the firemen?' I could see no objection to this —except the noise he would make, which I knew I should not like. But noise was just what the citizens of London wanted. On the previous nights, as all complained, London seemed to have no 'reply': and, as we had a weapon, it seemed right to use it. It was a moony night, with occasional cloud. We could clearly see our nearest balloons, and Longstaff kept saying that he could see the Germans. I saw no reason to doubt him. They had met so little resistance that they might well be coming in low. Sometimes he said that he could see his 'tracer' bullets going past them, and, though I did not think he was likely to bring a bomber down, I supposed that red bullets going past would be discouraging to the foe. Anyhow, there stood my tiger most of the night in the moonlight, with his beard and monocle, blazing away at the enemy whenever he saw good reason. It was, I claim, the most westerly action fought in the Thames under the White Ensign: but, though responsible for it, I found it rather a bore and retired to the cabin. Not to sleep. That happened to be the first night of the London barrage, and my mate was not the only one making a noise. During the night a dud anti-aircraft shell passed through the window of the House of Commons Library, not far below us, and penetrated the roof of the Members' 'refuge', where nobody was. In the morning, when I went ashore for newspapers, I was struck by the new expression of the people,

hurrying to work. They looked short of sleep, but perky. There was no evidence that any German bomber had been brought down: but London had 'answered back' at last, the noise had pleased them, and I felt rather proud that my mate had made some contribution to the noise.

I left an 'Ammunition Expended' report at Headquarters (it was about 200 rounds), and we started down the river for Holehaven, as usual.

But, if the Battle of Lambeth Bridge had bored me, it had greatly excited others. At our first port of call I was summoned to the telephone for a friendly rebuke from Captain Coleman, Harbour Master and leader of the Patrol. Complaints about the battle, it seemed, were crowding in. The big Fire Service Headquarters on the Surrey side said that we had drawn dangerous attention to the neighbourhood. One of the captive balloons had been shot down and we were suspected. There was even an improbable report that the Guards detachment on the Terrace of the Palace of Westminster had complained that we kept them awake. 'Don't you know,' said my harassed Commander, 'that there's no war above Dagenham?' I answered respectfully that Hitler did not seem to have heard of this rule—nor had I. 'Well, that's the rule for patrol-boats,' I was told. I said 'Aye, aye, sir,' and steamed along, a little discouraged, but thinking the matter closed. But evidently the storm grew about my Commander, for at every station at which I called I received a peremptory order to submit a special report in writing explaining why the Water Gipsy had fired at

Lewis gun at the enemy. This began to weary me, and I determined to let them have a very special report. We did patrol duty in Sea Reach that night, and I had no time for prose composition till the following night, when we lay at Cadogan Pier, Chelsea. Meanwhile, the Flag Officer-in-Charge, London, had issued an order (the first I had seen) concerning the use of patrol vessels' weapons. They were not to be fired unless (*a*) the height of the aircraft was not more than 1000 feet, (*b*) the enemy markings were clearly visible, (*c*) the patrol vessel was being attacked. I sat up till 0200 writing my report, and, this time, ignoring the behaviour of the enemy.

I rejected at length and with dignity the suggestion that we had shot down a balloon. I mentioned that my gunner had been able to see all the nearest balloons and had taken particular care not to fire in their direction. I reminded my superiors of the weight of metal that was flung into the air by the A.A. forces that night, including the unexploded shell which had passed through the window of the House of Commons Library not far from our mooring, and many large fragments of exploded shells. I submitted respectfully that about 200 rounds of .303 ammunition could not have added substantially to the peril of the balloons or the inhabitants of London. I forget the rest, except the end, to which I gave much thought. I said that I was unable to understand the new order and asked for guidance.

Strictly interpreted (I said) it seems to mean that

I am only to use my weapons when my own vessel and crew are in danger. I ask, with respect, for guidance, for such a limitation does not seem to me to be in accordance with the traditions of His Majesty's Navy, and will be accepted with reluctance by the crew of this vessel.

I have, Sir, the honour to be

A. P. HERBERT
P.O. *i/c Water Gipsy.*

My mate, and others to whom I showed the epistle, said that if I wanted to be flung out of the Navy or into the cells at Chatham Barracks, I had probably taken the best and quickest course. But I sent it in.

A day or two later, having to call at Dagenham, I saw my Commander coming down the narrow gangway. 'Now for it!' I thought, and halted with a smart salute.

'Good morning, Herbert,' he said, as genially as usual. I said, 'I hope my report was what you wanted, Sir?'

'Oh, that?' he said. 'You don't want to go on with that, do you?'

Till the end of the war my question remained unanswered.

A CRITIC IN THE BLITZ

During one of the 'Little Blitzes', on a snowy night in March 1944, we were lying at Westminster Pier. Someone thought they saw something fall on the barge-roads below Waterloo Bridge, where one of the roadsmen on our mine-watching roll was alone in his little hut. So we cast off and steamed down over the flood. One of the engines gave trouble, and as we came slowly through the Bridge the All Clear sounded. Nothing was amiss at the barge-roads, but there was a fire towards Fleet Street, a little way up the hill. I said, 'I bet that's my publishers!' (Methuen's, in Essex Street). It was no part of our duties to extinguish fires ashore, but I felt that in this case a reconnaissance was justified. We made fast alongside the *Discovery* (Captain Scott's ship), left the *Water Gipsy* in charge of the Sea Scouts (rather naughtily, I fear), and crunched through the snow in our sea-boots. My crew then were Leading Seaman Tom Cheesman, a Yorkshire fisherman, and Stoker Stan Atkins, a Lancashire lad. It was the night 'they' damaged again the fine Middle Temple Hall, which I had viewed so often from E. V. Lucas's room at the back of Methuen's. As we came up the steps into Essex Street, I said, 'My God, it is my publishers!' and we did the rest 'at the double'. The building on fire was in fact two doors off, but an incendiary bomb was burning on the leads outside 'E.V.'s' window, and water from the hoses next

door was pouring into Methuen's basement, which was full of books. There was one fire-watcher, and nobody else about. So we offered ourselves as a working-party, and hurried down into the pitch-dark basement, where the water was already some inches deep. My eager crew were in no mood to discriminate between one author and another. This was the skipper's publisher, and a book was a book. Their torches fell first on a great pile of girls' books, of the Head Girl at St. Hilda's kind, and with great armfuls of these they splashed upstairs. But, since it seemed likely that the whole stock would be destroyed, I thought I would be more choosy in my salvage. There were miles of books, in shelves from floor to ceiling, with narrow alleys between. Glad of the sea-boots, I paddled here and there, flashing my torch. What should I save? Suddenly, I realized, for the first time in my life, I was a literary critic. And, in the circumstances, my standards were very severe. I had become highbrow too. I will not reveal what well-known names I left on the shelves, to perish, for all I knew, in flame or flood. I did not see any of my own books; but, indeed, I was not looking for them.

The boys clattered back down the wooden steps, and Stan Atkins yelled, 'Skip, where are you? It's all right, Skip. Fire-watcher says it's all insured.' I took a poor view of that, though the fire-watcher, I am sure, had offered information, not advice. 'You carry on,' I said, and they saved, I suppose, more bundles of St. Hilda's. I splashed on a little, and came across a book of my own, *Uncommon Law*,

which had long been ' out of print '. Since it was insured, I felt justified in slipping it into the pocket of my duffel-coat. Then, at last, my search was over. I found a large colony of Mr. Hilaire Belloc's books. Some of that great man should be saved, if it was insured twice over. I collected a great bundle of Belloc and started back for the stairs. But just then, clutching the books with both hands, I dropped my torch in the water, and it went out. It was pitch-dark; I had come some way from the stairs, and the place was like a maze. I took a step forward and charged into the end of some shelves. I could, of course, have dropped Mr. Belloc and used my hands, but I am glad to say I decided against that, and I stood still and yelled. One of the boys yelled back: ' Come up, Skip! Fireman says to come up!' I yelled to them to come down. The water was rising, and, during the short wait, I confess I was conscious of slight unease.

Though I did not know it, the incendiary had come through into the ground-floor, and Methuen's was in fact, though mildly, on fire. It would, at least, have been a good literary end—an author dead in his publisher's basement, embracing the books of a master. But Stan came with his torch and we handed Mr. Belloc over to the fire-watcher. At the top o the stairs a very formidable fireman was in suspiciou talk with Cheesman. He may well have wondere what three sailors, in tin-hats, duffel-coats, and se boots, were doing at a literary fire; and I took ov the telling of our highly improbable tale. On su occasions I always, if I could, refused to say, ' I a

A. P. Herbert, a Member of Parliament, etc.', preferring to sail under my proper flag as P.O. i/c *Water Gipsy*. I had succeeded, I thought, in persuading him that this sort of thing was all in the day's work for the crew of a patrol-vessel, when I saw his eye wandering to the book, *Uncommon Law*, which protruded from my open pocket. 'Heavens!' I thought, 'I am now going to be charged with "looting" one of my own books.' But the fireman, bless him, said nothing and let us go. He and his men did very good work, and the damage was not so bad.

Back in the ship, Stan Atkins said: 'Skipper, I saw a letter with your name on it and brought it along. Thought you might like it for a souvenir.' How right he was! By the queerest chance it was a letter to Methuen's from a gentleman in the United States who wanted a copy of *Uncommon Law*. He had tried everywhere: could Methuen's help him? And on the letter was an office note showing that Methuen's had answered, 'Sorry. Out of print. Unobtainable.' But they were wrong. I made up my mind to send the American the book, the letter, and the story. But I fear I forgot.

OLIVER PHILPOT

STOLEN JOURNEY

Introductory Note

When Eric Williams published his book *The Wooden Horse*, it created a big wave of interest and admiration. The whole episode was so much an object lesson of persistent courage, and had about it such an air of bizarre unrealism that it could not fail to win the approval of a nation which still applauds personal initiative. The escape was broadcast and filmed.

Oliver Philpot's book appeared when the story was already well known throughout Britain; it would seem therefore to have started at a disadvantage. But it is so excellent a book and the writer so gifted in the telling of a tale that it was hailed as a worthy postscript to a mighty adventure. Philpot does not confine himself to the escape: he tells the story of his capture off the Norwegian coast, and thereafter the reader is given an insight into a prisoner-of-war's life, seen through the eyes of a man to whom the idea of escape was as natural as going to sleep at night.

It will be remembered that the escapers split u
as soon as they had broken out beyond the wire a
Sagan. Williams and his companion took train di
guised as French workers. Philpot, confident in h

ability to speak a pidgin German, preferred to travel as Jon Jorgensen, Norwegian margarine salesman in search of contracts. In comfort and at considerable speed, he journeyed to the busy Baltic port of Danzig. There the problem of getting on to a neutral ship forced him to abandon the pose of businessman. As this extract shows, he had to become a mixture of cat burglar and tight-rope walker. He himself sums up the situation—' my character parts were all at an end. I was a common or garden escaper now. I had " gone furtive " like a regular thief in the night.'

In the fifth paragraph of this extract Philpot sees the *Aralizz* in the same position as ' in the morning when my boat had brought me near her.' ' My boat ' is a little ' round-the-harbour-trip ' craft, on which he had, earlier the same day, studied the disposition of ships in harbour. It is this same boat which nearly traps him a little later.

ESCAPE

I bent down and scrambled along the horizontal fenders with which the dock front was faced, and kept above the water but below the level of the surface of the dock. In seconds I reached the fence where it jutted out. It was child's play. I swung out on the projection of it over the water. It took my weight. I went slowly in order to avoid catching on the barbed wire. The manoeuvre was extraordinary

similar to climbing after midnight round the railings which jut out into the lake of Worcester College, Oxford.

Reminiscences, however, were not in my mind at the time. The disposition of the enemy had better be studied, and quickly.

Cautiously I raised my head above the lip of the dock, very slowly.

There was open, flat, dock space in front of me and no sentries close at hand. I ran my eyes along the tall fence on the left, and there, sure enough, was the post with sentries carrying torches, beside the gate at the entrance which I had seen twice before at fairly close quarters; but now I was seeing it from the inside, from the dock itself.

The *Aralizz* was there all right, in the same position as in the morning when my boat had brought me near her. But how to climb on to her? She was being loaded with coal from railway trucks, the dock arc-lamps were shining down on the scene, and a strong searchlight followed each movement of the coal grab. The *Aralizz's* stern and sides rose sheer and smooth above the dock. There was a gangway in the down position and I would dearly have liked to have walked up this.

But the light shone brightly here, and there was a sentry, dead opposite the dock end of the ship's gangway. He paced up and down in a perfectly open, flat space which could offer me no concealment. His sole job was to guard the gangway.

I counted the length of his beat. It was thirteen paces, about turn, and thirteen paces back.

There was not the slightest prospect of slipping past him. The approach itself would be impossible, let alone the dash past him for the gangway. It was no good waving my papers at him. First question, how did I get on to the dock? Second question, who on the *Aralizz* would identify me?

I had stared long enough.

The only possible objective was one of those cables attached to the stern. I began to work my way along the wooden beams towards it. There were perhaps a hundred and fifty feet or so to go.

On the whole I felt cheered. Cable it would have to be, that was the gamble, but the start was auspicious. I had not had to swim round the fence, the dock wall was easy-going, and no sentry would see me unless he came right to the edge of the dock and looked almost vertically down.

So far so good. I felt secure from hostile eyes for the time being . . . yet . . . what was that? In my excitement during the start of my dock crawl I had forgotten all about the waters of the estuary behind me. The Vistula stretched wide, dark, and oily, with lights gleaming on the surface. It was so wide that the docks on the far side, about a quarter of a mile away, seemed minute and of no importance. Yet what was that sound? The swish-swish of a substantial vessel being propelled through the water. In a fraction of a second I turned my head as I clung spider-like to the dock side. There, in the darkness, I could see very well the lights of the Hafenrundfahrt boat approaching—coming, of course, right into the landing-stage upon which I had stood only a minute

or two before, congratulating myself on the absence of all other people. How ridiculous to forget my own boat, as it were.

I thought of dropping quickly into the Vistula and treading water quietly with my face turned away, but even as I hesitated I felt and looked as best I could behind the horizontal wooden fenders on which I clambered. There was a space. Big enough? Who knew? But the boat was only a few lengths away now and its engine-room telegraph rang to slow it down for the landing-stage close by me.

I started to squeeze behind the fenders very swiftly, and to my surprise found sufficient space between them and the solid masonry of the dock. As I crouched there with hardly room to move an inch a strong light played all along the dock face, throwing a glare between the fenders and into my hiding-place. Five seconds earlier and it would have caught me spreadeagled on the outside of the wooden fenders for all the German Hafenrundfahrt passengers to see. The light came from the movable searchlight on the boat, which was playing along the dock to pick up as accurately as possible its moorings at the stage.

I lay quiet. There was a babel of voices as passengers got off.

After minutes there was the clang-clang of the engine-room telegraph and I could hear the boat moving away—off to Seefers Hotel, I supposed.

I emerged from behind the fenders and resumed my spider crawl. Progress was quite good, and now and again I raised my head to survey the flat surface of the dock, but no sentry came close.

Already the landing-stage seemed a long way away. The stern of the *Aralizz* was looking quite close now.

Abruptly, as the curve of the dock straightened out, the wooden fenders came to an end. I arrived at a vertical metal ladder let into the wall. Beyond that, towards my ship, was a vertical wall of masonry with no handholds or footholds in it, and no wooden fenders superimposed on it.

At that moment, as I clung on to the ladder, I heard a slight movement and, looking behind me over the water, I saw that a light which I had previously thought was shining from the opposite bank a quarter of a mile or so away was, in reality, mounted in a small boat which was *only* about a hundred feet distant. Moreover, the boat was moving steadily towards me.

Something had to be done. There wasn't time to get back amongst the fenders. I could go into the *water, or I could go up on to the surface of the* dock. The boat came in my direction, its light—a lantern, or fixed light of some sort—distinctly moving up and down with the motion of the craft.

As I got a few feet up the ladder and looked on to the dock I saw a sentry with a torch advancing towards me from the main Swedish dock gateway in the wire fence. You could always tell whether a sentry was searching for someone, or not. If he was just wasting time the torch flashed aimlessly; if he was searching, the beam was directed here and there in a businesslike manner. This sentry was

having a search, and he was walking briskly towards the top of my ladder where I clung.

Meanwhile the little boat was coming along the Vistula to the bottom of my ladder.

I got up on top of the dock on hands and knees and looked desperately round for cover. I saw two low wooden boxes containing sand, for putting out incendiary bombs. I crawled quickly to one side of the nearest box. It was a complete gamble as to which side the sentry would come. As luck would have it he came by the far side from me, and I crawled around the box, keeping it between myself and him.

I froze.

The dock sentry was ten or twelve feet away, standing talking to the man in the little boat which had now reached the foot of my ladder.

Conversation went on for some time. I heard the words 'Weg gelaufen'—'Has run away.'

The palaver ended. The sentry, whom I could watch this time, returned, flashing his torch about, although it was light enough to see quite well without it. This time I could study him properly and decide to which side of my sand-box he was coming. We did our round-the-mulberry-bush act again. He walked, I crawled, and the sand-box lay between, separating us by perhaps four feet.

The sentry went back to his gate, presumably a disappointed man. I could see him rejoin one or two others by the wire fence. I waited to see a group of them sally forth and fan out towards me on an organised hunt.

Nothing happened.

I lay draped like a snake around my sand-box—sweating.

I looked round the corner. There was the gangway guard doing his thirteen-pace beat. At intervals there was a whirring noise of machinery and the crane by the *Aralizz* dipped and brought up a grabful of coal. This it swung across and released with the sound of a young avalanche deep into the ship, the searchlight following it round and bathing the scene with a bright light.

My little boat had disappeared. But for all I knew it might still be at the bottom of the ladder.

Inaction was useless.

The bollard fixed in the dock, and which held the land end of the two cables attaching the stern of the *Aralizz* to the dock, was about thirty feet away.

The space between me and it was open. There was nothing to hide behind. Several things could happen. The sentries from the gate might see me, as might the sentry by the gangway. And when I got to the bollard the men (presumably river police) in the small boat also might see me.

I crawled out from the security of the sand-box trying to time my movements to take place when the gangway sentry had his back to me. I went on keeping my head down as much as possible so that the only light-coloured part of me, my face, would not show. I had my gloves on.

From time to time I looked up as I drew myself over the dock surface. On one of these occasions, when I was about half-way across the space which I had to cover, I saw to my consternation

walking briskly, shoulder to shoulder, past my gang-way guard and along the dock, towards me. They were obviously going off duty. I could tell by their springy, carefree walk—not at all the stolid, bored tread of your sentry on the job. They carried torches which they flashed about at random.

These two German soldiers were headed straight for me . . . now they were eighty feet away . . . now seventy . . . now sixty . . . and walking fast.

My sand-box was so far behind me that it might have been in another world for all the use it was as a shelter. The ladder was also too far . . . so was the bollard. When crawling in the open a few feet are an immense distance.

There was only one thing to do. I did it. I lay dead still, flattened on the dock, with my face pressed downwards.

I waited. This was the end. I wondered whether they would lose their heads and rifle-butt me, or even fire, or whether they would simply lead me off. . . . I made up my mind to throw my forged papers—the best ones—into the Vistula.

I lay by the rail of a railway track along which coal trucks were presumably shunted at times.

I could hear the sentries' footsteps now . . . and their voices . . . talking away . . . now the swish of their large Army greatcoats . . . wait for it . . . wait for it . . . now they were almost abreast of me . . . but . . . yes . . . on the other side of the track . . . that would lead them four feet eight and a half inches from where I lay . . . now they were up to me . . . still . . . must keep still . . . were

they pausing? . . . no . . . their conversation flowed on . . . their footsteps never faltered . . . now . . . and— . . . incredible luck . . . they were past me . . . still going strong.

After an age I lifted my face. They had disappeared.

There were still fifteen feet between me and the bollard. This was no time to look about and to be cautious. Events moved too quickly. I crawled swiftly to the bollard and, seizing one of the *Aralizz's* two cables, swung myself out on it. The cable hung in a fairly deep loop, and clinging to this like a monkey I was now in a pool of shadow because I was well below the lip of the dock. I could not see my little boat, but only the black water beneath me.

Hanging there, I looked up at the large, rounded stern of the *Aralizz*. The points of attachment of the two cables at the ship were in shadow. I chose one of the two, and took a last look at the ship before I started up the cable. The vessel looked as huge as the *Queen Mary*, and the cable, as far as I could follow it with my eye, seemed practically vertical. There was one patch, too, where the dock arc-lamps caught it nicely, or seemed to; this was just about at the level of gaze of the sentries at the gate. The lighting there made it all the more difficult for me to see details at the stern of the ship.

I started my climb. I made good progress. Then it got steeper. Now at last I was through the lighted bit and close to the ship. At last I was there, but what was this? The cable met the rounded stern of the ship and then, forced tight against the plates,

disappeared round the far side. I was still distinctly below deck level, and I could not follow the cable further because I could no longer get my hands round it as it was drawn so tight to the curved stern of the vessel.

Instantly I knew what I had done. In spite of my reconnaissances I had chosen the wrong cable. There was no method by which I could get to the *Aralizz*'s deck, only four or five feet above me now. So very close.

Nor could I get into the ship through a port-hole. They were too small.

In stupid desperation I rapped my knuckles against the glass of one. Nothing happened, nor was there any light inside. The thought flashed through my mind, 'Anyway, I can tell them when I get back to Sagan that I knocked on the port-hole of my neutral ship.'

I came down the cable.

I very much doubted if I would have the strength to get up the other, which was steeper, or the luck still not to be seen. It appeared highly doubtful that a dark figure, like some enormous rat, could climb again up a cable to the ship without being seen.

Nor could I rest. To go on the dock again would be crazy. All I could do was to hang on to the loop of my cable like a sloth, gasping for breath and trying not to let go with my feet. If I did, I felt I would never get them back again wrapped round the cable.

I transferred to the correct cable which was attached to the same bollard.

I struggled up it . . . now I was in the light patch . . . no disturbance from the sentries . . . no sign of the little river boat . . . the stern was closer . . . but my arms were aching badly . . . I paused . . . that was worse than ever, merely prolonged it . . . had time to think how tired my arms were . . . on for a few more feet . . . at last . . . into the shadow . . . but it was nearly vertical now . . . or seemed to be . . . terribly steep . . . it was a question of inches at a time . . . at last . . . here's where the cable's fixed to the ship . . . it went through the usual hole in the ship's plating and was coiled around bollards on deck . . . but I was underneath the wire . . . what should I do? . . . had to get on top, yet not so that I immediately lost balance and rolled over the other side . . . my muscles would not stand such a sudden gyration . . . then, could I stand on the cable and, leaning on the ship's plating, reach for the deck rail? . . . no . . . impossible . . . look . . . I could probably get through the cable hole in the plating . . . with a last heave I rolled on top of the cable and, reaching ahead, grasped the iron bollard with the cable draped round it . . . now my head was through the gap . . . I squeezed my body through . . . and drew up my legs, quickly . . . on deck I crawled swiftly to the non-dock side, in case the German in the crane could see me—there was no one about on the ship . . . I lay flat on the deck . . . gasping and sweating . . . and listening . . . listening . . . for shouting, for shots, for all the noises of a search. There were none. The crane clanked and rattled; the coal poured into the ship.

I had got on to my neutral ship, unaided, and without being seen by the Germans.

As I recovered I classified this as the third best moment. The first had been looking at Stalag Luft III from the outside, the second to feel the Berlin express moving out of Sagan Station. The third was now to stand on the deck of the *Aralizz*, in the shadow of the stern upperworks, and to survey Danzig, Hitler's Baltic naval base, from my neutral ship. I felt practically inebriated with the sheer pleasure of achievement. I studied the far-off dock lights on the other side, and the dark Vistula.

Slowly I came to realise that my trip was not over. There was, as anticipated, this trouble about hiding on the ship. It would of course be searched, as a matter of routine, from stem to stern, by German guards who were used to routing out shady characters who were tempted to leave the Reich for the flesh-pots of Sweden. Rumour had it that the guards usually had dogs, which nosed about everywhere, and that ships, even when they had left their Baltic port, were intercepted as often as not by German patrol boats, after the voyage was an hour or two under way. On the patrol boats were Germans who were likely to come aboard to have another search.

I studied the stern. Nothing here but the upper-works and a solidly-locked door leading to the crew's quarters. I had always meant to take instruction from kriegies in lock-picking, but had never got round to it. A pity.

I would have to try amidships. Coal was being dumped into the bow hatches of the *Aralizz*, but

any moment I thought that the crane might run along the dock and start filling the stern hatches. Anyway, there was much too much light.

I crawled along the deck, on the non-dock side, keeping well below the combing of the hatch.

I reached the cabin amidships. The ship was deserted, it seemed. Here, however, a door was open. I went inside. There was a warm corridor, and, opening off it, a little lighted galley which I entered. I could smell a chocolatey smell and soon found a large saucepan with a delicious cocoa mixture in it, keeping warm on a stove. I helped myself repeatedly to the contents, using the large ladle as a cup. This was all very refreshing.

I could still think of nowhere to hide, and when I came out of the galley I saw a cabin with the door ajar and a light on inside. There were no voices, so presumably a Swede was in there alone.

I walked to the door, knocked, and entered. A stocky man, perhaps in his middle fifties, got up from his chair by a table. He wore a short-cut white jacket and seemed to be a sort of steward. He was very surprised.

'Sh-sh . . . !' I said. 'It's all right . . . I'm an English flier . . . escaped . . . no one knows I'm here.' And I repeated it in German.

He understood very well, but seemed unable to speak. His mouth moved, and he looked on me very seriously and with considerable alarm.

'N-n-no . . . N-n-no . . . I can . . . d-d-do n-n-nothing . . . you must l-l-leave this s-s-ship.'

J. H. WILLIAMS

ELEPHANT BILL

Introductory Note

'I defy anyone not to be interested and intrigued by elephants,' writes Field-Marshal Sir William Slim in a review of *Elephant Bill*. This is a challenge few will take up.

Colonel Williams' fondness for animals does not begin and end with elephants. He graduated to them through a childhood love of a donkey, through 1914–18 war service in the Camel Corps, and lastly through the job of Transport Officer in mule teams. When in the Camel Corps, he had read a book on the diseases of camels and elephants. The opportunity to work among the latter in Burma came in 1920; it was eagerly seized. So, for a quarter of a century, Colonel Williams worked in wild places, supervising the care and training of elephants. He thus came to know their ways and moods better, perhaps, than any living white man.

Colonel Williams was born at Land's End. Of Cornwall he writes: 'The loneliness and the life of the Burmese Jungles came, perhaps, easier to me than to others, for Cornwall, the background of my youth, had provided a fitting armour to see the world.' That 'fitting armour' for life's journey was 'neither money, pen nor sword, but an insatiable love of

nature, its kindness and its cruelty, its patience and its courage, which I found and understood in the wild birds and animals and in the wild freedom where the joy of a summer's day was only equalled by one of tempest and storm.' Colonel Williams has now left the East and is back on his farm in Cornwall.

His book is not only a mine of information about elephants; it is also a fine tale of adventure. There is, for instance, the death of Poo Ban, 'the finest and bravest', who had gone suddenly and unaccountably berserk; medical operations and the battle against infectious diseases; night in a haunted village; the hunting of tigers and leopards; finally, the whole amazing story of the part played by elephants in the Burma campaigns.

The book is in two parts, the second of which deals entirely with the war in Burma. Organised into Elephant Companies, oozies and beasts did splendid service on military work for which they were ideally suited—road-making, bridging, carriage of stores and wounded, and many other tasks. Though generally behind the fighting line, the battle was often so chaotic that elephants would be found in positions of danger. The great elephant trek out of Burma into Assam, when the Japanese were making their last desperate bid for victory, is an example of this.

Field-Marshal Slim sums up the book with admirable conciseness—'A good book, about good men and good beasts.'

•

AN OOZIE'S WORK

I arrived in Burma just as a determined effort had been started to improve the management of elephants and their calves. In order to do this, it was first necessary to improve the conditions of the oozie, who must be considered as part and parcel of the Burmese timber-working elephant which he rides. These men are born with a knowledge of elephants. Their homes are in camps in the most remote parts of the jungle. They can sit an elephant from the age of six, and they grow up learning all the traditional knowledge, the myth and legend, the blended fact and fiction, which is attached to this lovable animal. At the age of fourteen the average boy in an elephant camp is earning a wage. He starts life as a paijaik—that is, the man who hooks the chains to the logs—a ground assistant of the oozie who rides on the elephant's neck.

It is a proud day in that boy's life when he is promoted to oozie and has an elephant in his own charge. There is no more lovely sight than to see a fourteen-year-old boy riding a newly trained calf elephant of six. The understanding between them is only equalled by that of a child with a puppy, but the Burmese boy is not so cruel to his elephant as most children are with puppies. The Burman oozie is cruel to his elephant only if he loses his temper, but usually he has the patience of Job. He has a pretty hard life. In the first place, he has to catch

his elephant every morning and bring it to camp. The camp is often a hundred miles from his village, and may consist of a few jungle huts, or even no more than a couple of tarpaulins making a shelter on the bank of some creek in the densest jungle. *Catching his elephant involves tracking the animal* a distance of about eight miles, starting at dawn through jungles infested with all types of big game. That in itself is a lonely job, and to do it successfully the oozie has to become one of the jungle beasts himself—*as alert and as wary as they are.*

He knows the shape, size and peculiarities of his own elephant's footprints with such certainty that he can recognise them at once and distinguish them from all other elephant footprints. Once he *has picked them up, he sets off, following the trail.* While he is doing so he notices many things: he finds the spot where the animal rested in the night, he observes its droppings, and, after giving one heap of dung a kick, can tell that his elephant has *been eating too much bamboo* and, for that reason will probably have headed for a patch of kaing grass that grows on the banks of the creek over the watershed.

When he has gained the ridge he will halt and *listen, perhaps for* ten minutes, for the sound of the bell his particular animal wears round its neck. He can hear a bell perhaps two miles away. [illegible] he decides it is not the tone of the bell that he made himself, hollowing it from the teak with such *intricate care.* So he goes on again, descending to the creek, and when he is half a mile from the [illegible]

grass he listens again and this time he recognises the sound of his own kalouk. Elephant bells are made with two clappers, one on each side, hanging outside the bell, which is made from a hollowed-out lump of teak. No two bells ever have the same note, and the sound of fifteen or more can only be compared to the music of a babbling brook.

As the oozie approaches his beast he begins to sing, so as to let her know that he is coming. He has taught her, or she has taught him, that it is dangerous for them to startle each other in the jungle. So, instead of bursting through the kaing grass that stands nine feet high, he sits down on a boulder beside the creek and fills his home-made pipe and lights it. Between the puffs he keeps calling: 'Lah! lah! lah!' (Come on! come on! come on!) But no sound comes from where his elephant is grazing, so he changes his words to: 'Digo lah! Digo lah!' (Come here! Come here!) And he will sit and smoke and call for fifteen minutes without showing impatience. He gives her time to accept the grim fact that another day of hard work has begun for her. If he hurried her, she might rebel.

Presently the elephant emerges from the kaing grass, and, chatting away to her, he says: 'Do you think I've nothing else to do but wait for you? You've been eating since noon yesterday, and I haven't had a bite of breakfast.'

Then his voice rings out with a firm order: 'Hmit!'

Dropping first on her haunches, then reposing with all four legs extended, she allows him to approach her.

'Tah!' ('Stand up!'), he orders, and she does so, keeping her front legs close together. He then bends down and unfastens her fetter-chain and throws it over her withers. These hobbles are either chain or cane, and are put on fairly tight and with little play between the legs. When the animal is hobbled it can either shuffle slowly on easy ground or progress by a series of hops. But in spite of this it can go fast: for short distances it can go as fast as a man can run.

After unfastening the hobbles the oozie orders her to sit down, then he climbs on to her head, and away they go, back to camp, by the route she has been feeding along ever since the previous day.

When they reach camp the oozie has his first meal of the day, washes his elephant in the creek, and then harnesses her for work. Their job for the day is to climb a ridge two thousand feet above the camp and to drag a log from the stump to the creek.

When the oozie reaches the log with his elephant and his paijaik, he will trim it, cutting off knots where there were branches with his axe, so as to make it easier for dragging. He also cuts a hole in the thinner end of the log, through which the dragging-chains are passed. This hole, called a nepah, is so useful in handling the log when rafting, as well as in dragging, that though it is wasteful of good timber it is preferred to fastening the chains round the log in a clove hitch, or to any other form of attachment.

Then he will make sure the chains are securely fastened. After that there begins the wearisome task

of dragging a log twenty-nine feet long and six or seven feet in girth—that is to say, over a hundred cubic feet of timber, or four tons dead weight. For a mile the path follows the top of the ridge. 'Patience! patience! patience! Yoo! yoo! yoo!' ('Pull! pull! pull!'), calls the oozie. As the elephant takes the strain, she feels what power she must exert besides that of her enormous weight. Tremendous energy is necessary. The ground is ankle-deep in mud, and there are dozens of small obstructions which must be levelled out by the log's nose—sapling stumps, bamboos, stones, even rocks. So the elephant puts out her first effort and, bellowing like mad, pulls the log three times her own length and then stops. She rests then to take breath, and her trunk goes out sideways to snatch at a bamboo. It is her chewing-gum as she works, but it earns her a sarcastic comment from the oozie: 'My mother, but you are forever eating!' However, his patience is quite undisturbed. The elephant takes her time. 'Yoo! yoo! yoo!' calls the oozie, but there is no response. 'Yooo! yooo! yooo!' Then the elephant pulls again, but this time, as it is slightly downhill, she pulls the log six times her length before she halts. So it goes on, until they reach the edge of a precipice—a four-hundred-foot drop. The elephant knows the margin of safety to a foot, and when the log is ten feet from the edge she refuses to haul it any closer. The chain are unfastened, and the elephant is moved roun behind the log. The oozie gives his orders by kick and scratches with his bare feet behind the elephant ears. So he coaxes her to bend down her massi

head in order to get a leverage under the log with her trunk. Working like that, she moves it first four feet at one end, then rolls it from the middle, then pushes the other end, until she has got it almost trembling on the balance on to the very edge of the cliff. She will then torment her oozie by refusing to touch it again for ten minutes. Finally, when the oozie's patience is almost at an end, and the elephant can foresee that she will get a cursing and a vigorous toe-nail scratching behind her ears if she refuses any longer, she puts one forefoot out as calmly as if she were tapping a football; and the log is away—gone. There is a crash in the jungle below, and then a prolonged series of crashes echoing through the jungle, as the log tears down bamboos, until it comes to rest four hundred feet lower down, leaving the elephant standing on the edge of the precipice above, with a supercilious expression on her face, as though she were saying: 'Damned easy.'

Half an hour later elephant and oozie have reached the log again, having gone round by a circuitous game-track to the foot of the precipice. Once down there, she has again to drag the log with the chains along a ledge, which has been roughly blasted out of the hillside around a precipitous waterfall.

Such blasting is often done by a more primitive method than using dynamite. The rock is heated with a fierce brushwood fire and then cracked by pouring water over it. After that the fractured rocks are again broken with crowbars, and the big pieces disposed of by elephants.

Dragging a log weighing four tons while negotiating

a not very wide ledge is a risky business, for the log might roll. But the elephant can judge what is safe to the inch—not to the foot—and she works with patience, patience, patience. Both oozie and elephant know that should the log start to roll or slide over the edge, all the gear and harness can be got rid of in the twinkling of an eye. The elephant has only to whip round in her tracks, step inside her chain, and bend down her head for all the harness to peel off over her head as easily as a girl will strip a silk slip off over her shoulders. For this reason it is very rare indeed for an elephant to be dragged over a precipice by a log suddenly taking charge.

After negotiating the ledge there is an easy down-hill drag for half a mile to the floating point on the side of the creek. By that time it is about three o'clock in the afternoon. The oozie unharnesses his elephant, puts on her fetters, slaps her on her rump, and tells her that she must go off in search of food. For neither of them is their day's work really over. The elephant still has to find her fodder; not only to chew it, but to break off, pull down, or pull up, every branch, tree, creeper or tuft of grass that she eats. The oozie has to repair his gear, trim logs or weave a new laibut, or breast-strap of bark. This bit of harness takes the full strain of the elephant's strength when dragging, and has to be made accordingly. It gets a tremendous lot of wear.

Such is the oozie's day's work—and with it all he is a very happy man.

His chief relaxation is gambling. He does often literally lose the shirt off his back. I have seen one

particular shirt worn by six different owners in a year. But they don't wear their shirts at work, but only dress up in the evening and when showing their elephants for inspection.

The hardest work, described above, lasts from June until March. Then for three months the oozie gets a rest from logging, but has still to look after his elephant every day.

He is, as I know Burma, all that is left of the real Burman—the cheerful Irishman of the East. I have watched him fraternise with all who played a part in the evacuation of Burma in 1942 and with those who recaptured it in 1945—the British soldier, the Gurkha, the Sikh, the Punjabi, the West African and the East African. He even fraternised with the Jap, because he would not abandon his elephant, and for a time both had to work for a new master.

One gets to know one's riders at the same time, and in the same way, as one gets to know the elephants. They are so much part of one another.



ELEPHANT WIT

I don't believe that 'an elephant never forgets', but I should scarcely be surprised if he tied a knot in his trunk to remember something, if he wanted to. His little actions are always revealing an intelligence which finds impromptu solutions for new difficulties. If he cannot reach with his trunk some part of his body that itches, he doesn't always rub it against a

tree; he may pick up a long stick and give himself a good scratch with that, instead. If one stick isn't long enough, he will look for another which is.

If he pulls up some grass, and it comes up by the roots with a lump of earth, he will smack it against his foot until all the earth is shaken off, or, if water is handy, he will wash it clean, before putting it into his mouth. And he will extract a pill (the size of an aspirin tablet) from a tamarind fruit the size of a cricket ball in which one has planted it, with an air of saying: 'You can't kid me.'

Elephants can also detach a closely clinging creeper, like ivy, from a tree far more skilfully than can a man working with two hands. This is due to their greater delicacy of touch.

Many young elephants develop the naughty habit of plugging up the wooden bell they wear hung round their necks (kalouk) with good stodgy mud or clay, so that the clappers cannot ring, in order to steal silently into a grove of cultivated bananas at night. There they will have a whale of a time, quietly stuffing, eating not only the bunches of bananas, but the leaves and, indeed, the whole tree as well, and they will do this just beside the hut occupied by the owner of the grove, without waking him or any o his family.

Catching a young animal at this is just like catchin a small boy among the gooseberry bushes. For som reason stolen fruit is always sweetest.

Oozies are not always as innocent as they prete on such occasions. I once had to pay a fine to t Forest Department for damage done by my elepha

to some experimental plantations of teak saplings. Naturally, I gave the oozies a reprimand for their slackness in allowing their animals to stray into these plantations. A month afterwards I happened to meet the Forest Officer who had fined me, near a large village, where we both camped for the night. He had four elephants with him, and I had eight. Next morning his annoyance can be imagined when the village headman arrived to ask for compensation for no less than a hundred banana-trees, destroyed by his four elephants. Strangely enough, not one of my eight elephants had been involved in the mischief, a fact which made it even more annoying for him. It was not until a week after we had parted company that I found out that though my elephants were innocent, my oozies were quite the reverse. They had taken the bells off the Forest Officer's four elephants and during the night had led them quietly into the banana groves—and had thus paid him out for fining me for the damage to the teak plantation.

I have personally witnessed many remarkable instances of the quick intelligence of elephants, though I cannot claim that they equal the famous yarns which delight all of us, whether we are children or grown-ups—such as that of the circus elephant who saw a man who had befriended him sitting in a sixpenny seat, and at once picked him up with his trunk and popped him into a three-and-sixpenny one!

But the following incidents seem to me to denote immediate brain reaction to a new situation, rather than anything founded on repetitive training.

An uncertain-tempered tusker was being loaded

with kit while in the standing position. On his back was his oozie, with another Burman in the pannier, filling it with kit. Alongside, on the flank, standing on the ground was the paijaik attendant, armed with a spear which consisted of a five-foot cane, a brightly polished spearhead at one end and spiked ferrule at the other. Another Burman was handing gear up to the Burman in the pannier, but got into difficulties with one package and called out to the paijaik to help him. The latter thrust the ferrule of the spear into the ground so that it stood planted upright, with the spearhead in line with the elephant's eye. Then he lent a hand. The oozie, however, did not trust his beast, and said in a determined voice, 'Pass me the spear.' The tusker calmly put its trunk round the cane at the point of balance, and carefully passed it up to his rider. But, unthinkingly, he passed it head first and held it as though waiting for the rider to catch hold of it by the head.

The rider yelled at his beast in Burmese: 'Don't be a fool—pass it right way round!' With perfect calm and a rather dandified movement, the elephant revolved the spear in mid-air and, still holding it by the point of balance, passed it to his oozie, this time ferrule first.

The oozie did not say thank you, but gave him a curse with a touch of endearment—as though saying, 'You are a damned ill-mannered wild elephant, and I want no more of it.' Then, with a quick movement, he moved the spearhead beside the elephant's eye, an action which meant that he would suffer for it if he tried any tricks with his tusks on those engaged

in loading him up. The loading was completed without incident.

Sometimes an elephant will show its intelligence by divining what its oozie wishes.

A case I remember concerned an animal which would not work with a rider on its head, but was obedient to the words of command given by its oozie walking alongside. I was watching this beast straightening logs in a creek—that is to say, placing them in rows of eight or twelve parallel to each other and pointing down the bed of the stream, in readiness for the first floods to carry them away. The oozie was sitting on the bank; work was almost finished, but, because I was around, he knew every log had to be straight in line with the others before they broke off.

There was one noticeable and unshapely log, and the elephant came to the last row in which it lay. He was a big tusker, and was doing all the work with his tusks and head, free of all chains. Without any word of command being given, he let the first log alone, and began shifting the second, keeping one eye on his oozie, as though saying: 'Come on, wake up and tell me what you want!'

The oozie soon told him, shouting: 'You old fool! What's wrong with that one? Leave it.'

The elephant moved on to the next log, keeping his eye cocked on his oozie, like an old man looking over a pair of spectacles.

'No,' shouted the oozie. 'You know as well as I do,' and made a gesture of picking up a stone to throw at his beast.

The elephant gave a squeal of pure delight at having pulled his oozie's leg, and, without hesitation, disregarded the next five logs and, without pausing, bent down and rolled the one irregularly placed log over four times, leaving it exactly parallel with the others and about a foot from them. Then he walked up to his master, as though to say: 'Enough fooling, let's break off!' and the day's work was finished for man and beast.

But one of the most intelligent acts I ever witnessed an elephant perform did not concern its work, and might just as well have been the act of a wild animal.

One evening, when the Upper Taungdwin River was in a heavy spate, I was listening and hoping to hear the boom and roar of timber coming from upstream. Directly below my camp the banks of the river were steep and rocky and twelve to fifteen feet high. About fifty yards away on the other side, the bank was made up of ledges of shale strata. Although it was already nearly dusk, by watching these ledges being successively submerged, I was trying to judge how fast the water was rising.

I was suddenly alarmed by hearing an elephant roaring as though frightened, and, looking down, I saw three or four men rushing up and down on the opposite bank in a state of great excitement. I realised at once that something was wrong, and ran down to the edge of the near bank and there saw Ma Shwe (Miss Gold) with her three-months-old calf, trapped in the fast-rising torrent. She herself was still in her depth, as the water was about six feet deep. But there was a life-and-death struggle going on. Her cal

was screaming with terror and was afloat like a cork. Ma Shwe was as near to the far bank as she could get, holding her whole body against the raging and increasing torrent, and keeping the calf pressed against her massive body. Every now and then the swirling water would sweep the calf away; then, with terrific strength, she would encircle it with her trunk and pull it upstream to rest against her body again.

There was a sudden rise in the water, as if a two-foot bore had come down, and the calf was washed clean over the mother's hindquarters and was gone. She turned to chase it, like an otter after a fish, but she had travelled about fifty yards downstream and, plunging and sometimes afloat, had crossed to my side of the river, before she had caught up with it and got it back. For what seemed minutes, she pinned the calf with her head and trunk against the rocky bank. Then, with a really gigantic effort, she picked it up in her trunk and reared up until she was half standing on her hind legs, so as to be able to place it on a narrow shelf of rock, five feet above the flood level.

Having accomplished this, she fell back into the raging torrent, and she herself went away like a cork. She well knew that she would now have a fight to save her own life, as, less than three hundred yards below where she had stowed her calf in safety, there was a gorge. If she were carried down, it would be certain death. I knew, as well as she did, that there was one spot between her and the gorge where she could get up the bank, but it was on the other side from where she had put her calf. By that time, my chief interest was in the calf. It stood, tucked up,

shivering and terrified on a ledge just wide enough to hold its feet. Its little, fat, protruding belly was tightly pressed against the bank.

While I was peering over at it from about eight feet above, wondering what I could do next, I heard the grandest sounds of a mother's love I can remember. Ma Shwe had crossed the river and go up the bank, and was making her way back as fast as she could, calling the whole time—a defiant roar, but to her calf it was music. The two little ears, like little maps of India, were cocked forward, listening to the only sound that mattered, the call of her mother.

Any wild schemes which had raced through my head of recovering the calf by ropes disappeared as fast as I had formed them, when I saw Ma Shwe emerge from the jungle and appear on the opposite bank. When she saw her calf, she stopped roaring and began rumbling, a never-to-be-forgotten sound, not unlike that made by a very high-powered car when accelerating. It is the sound of pleasure, like a cat's purring, and delighted she must have been to see her calf still in the same spot, where she had put her half an hour before.

As darkness fell, the muffled boom of floating logs hitting against each other came from upstream. A torrential rain was falling, and the river still separated the mother and her calf. I decided that I could do nothing but wait and see what happened. Twice before turning in for the night I went down to the bank and picked out the calf with my torch, but this seemed to disturb it, so I went away.

It was just as well I did, because at dawn Ma Shwe and her calf were together—both on the far bank. The spate had subsided to a mere foot of dirty-coloured water. No one in the camp had seen Ma Shwe recover her calf, but she must have lifted it down from the ledge in the same way as she had put it there.

THE JUNGLE IS NEUTRAL

Introductory Note

The late Field-Marshal Lord Wavell has likenec Colonel Spencer Chapman to an Elizabethan adventurer. To which comparison he adds this remark—'Inevitably Colonel Chapman's adventures and achievements recall those of a famous character of the last war (1914–18), T. E. Lawrence, who also endured greatly and survived by the high quality of his spirit.'

Spencer Chapman was educated at Sedbergh, and at the outbreak of war was a housemaster at Gordonstoun School, Morayshire. *The Jungle is Neutral* tells the whole story of his amazing adventures in Malaya after the Japanese had overrun the country early in 1942. He is a man possessed of almost superhuman powers of endurance; he would think little of forging his way alone on foot through the jungle with a raging temperature of 104° or more. At various times he suffered from such diseases as black water fever and pneumonia, and survived them under conditions which would have killed ninety-nine out of a hundred. On one occasion he marchec for six days without food. He kept diaries of all hi: experiences, written in Eskimo in order to baffle th(enemy should those valuable documents be captured

As a leader and trainer of guerilla forces in thei

jungle activities, Spencer Chapman became a marked man, his scalp a thing any Japanese soldier would have prized. He was captured, but, as one might expect, escaped; bullets found their mark twice, but he lived to tell the tale thanks to extraordinary toughness not only of body but also of mind. As he himself prescribes, the right mental attitude to hardship is the most important weapon in the fight. 'There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so,' sums up his philosophy of life.

Since the war Spencer Chapman has spent a great deal of time in encouraging young people to mountaineer and to undertake outdoor activities in some of the more remote corners of the British Isles. He himself has considerable experience both of climbing and of exploring.

The skirmish on the King's Highway took place very soon after the fall of Singapore. The country was still in that state of complete chaos which is bound to prevail for some time after a conquest. But guerilla forces were already formed; Spencer Chapman and Haywood had indeed joined up with Ah Loy's group of Chinese Communists six weeks before the incidents referred to in this extract took place. The Englishmen's military experience made them invaluable as instructors to train the young guerillas.

Immediately after being wounded by the motor-car nut from the Malayan's gun, Spencer Chapman succumbed to a violent attack of high fever and pneumonia combined with dysentery; he and Haywood were seriously ill for two months 'running extremely high temperatures, and being daily shaken by violent rigors'.

SKIRMISH ON THE KING'S HIGHWAY

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At last, shortly before dawn, we reached the 20th Mile, but although there was a brilliant moon Haywood could not find the steep narrow track which led through the thick roadside jungle to the derelict charcoal-burner's oven in which the stores had been hidden four months before. Accordingly we spent the rest of the night drinking samsu (spirit distilled from rice) in a coffee-house half a mile up the road, which was kept by two very old Chinese who behaved as if it was in no way out of the ordinary to entertain Englishmen at such a time.

Next morning, as soon as it was light, we went down to the dump, but even so only narrowly avoided being seen by some Tamil coolies and Chinese cyclists who were already on the road. We found the charcoal-burner's oven without difficulty; but it was flooded with water and it appeared that bears had broken into it, for the four-gallon tins of rice, sugar, and oil had all been smashed and everything was topsy-turvy. However, the explosive, ammunition, grenades and smaller tins of food were intact and these were taken back to the camp in broad daylight by a party of ten of Ah Piow's men, who arrived for this purpose at dawn on bicycles with large suitcases on the carriers.

We lay up for the whole of that day in an old clearing high above the road, from which we had a wonderful view of a series of S-bends above us where the road toiled through magnificent jungle to reach the summit of the Genting Sempak three miles farther on; but there was little traffic on the road and I spent my time sleeping in the sun or making

notes on the innumerable varieties of birds, most of which were new to me.

As I knew there was a sentry at Kampong Ketari, where the Karak road turns off, I insisted that we should not start until midnight so as to pass him at about 2.0 a.m.; and we spent the early part of the night very pleasantly, eating rice and curried fish with the two old Chinese in the coffee-shop. From them we heard something of conditions in Malaya now. I listened to frightful accounts of the innumerable cold-blooded massacres of Chinese perpetrated by the Japs, especially in areas where the guerillas were known to be active, and I was astonished —though it was so universal that I ceased to wonder at it later—that these old men showed absolutely no reluctance to help us, although it would have been certain death for them had they been caught. It seemed that the Chinese throughout Malaya, especially in the country districts, were filled with a most bitter hatred of the Japanese and yet felt themselves completely impotent to do anything about it —except to support the guerillas, which they were prepared to do to the limit.

This night's journey was a lamentable example of the fundamental incompetence of the Chinese guerillas —even the leaders of the Selangor and Pahang Groups —when it came to getting a job done. Before we set off they absolutely refused to make any sort of plan, Ah Loy saying that it was unnecessary and that he would just shoot up anybody who should dare to try to stop us. It was a brilliant moonlit night and there were a good many Chinese cyclists on the road and,

even at this hour of the night, some Tamil bullock carts toiling slowly up the pass. Tan Chen King, Ah Loy and another Chinese who accompanied us, again insisted on riding up the hill, and Haywood and I, who for some reason were not feeling well, were soon completely exhausted as well as soaked through with sweat in our efforts to keep up, for we felt it was most dangerous to be spread over several miles of road. Fortunately it was only three miles—in which we climbed over 500 feet—to the summit of the pass at 2080 feet; and then we knew there were twenty miles of free-wheeling to the cross-roads at Kampong Ketari, with a farther ten miles downhill to Sungei Gow, a few miles short of Karak.

On the way up we had had some trouble owing to the chains of our bicycles breaking from the undue strain, but Ah Loy, who had the usual Chinese genius for improvisation, managed to mend these with wire, explaining that Tan Chen King, who was then far ahead, had the only tools. The descent was magnificent: in the brilliant tropical moonlight we could go as fast as by daylight and it was glorious to see the huge jungle trees rush past us and to feel the cool fecund night air on our faces. Then Tan Chen King's tyre burst and it was discovered that Ah Loy, who had the only puncture-mending outfit, had gone on ahead, and it took over an hour for the third Chinese to overtake him and bring him back.

At about the 75th Mile, soon after we had rattled at long intervals over a plank bridge, I had halted for a moment with one foot on the ground to wait for the other Chinese, whose bicycle had been giving

uble and who had been out of sight for some me. Suddenly three cyclists overtook me and, as e of them came right alongside, I saw he was a alay policeman and had a double-barrelled shotgun cross his handlebars. Recognizing me as an English-man, he gave a loud grunt and attempted to seize my handlebars. I had my ·38 revolver thrust into my belt, but at that time I did not feel I was at war with Malays and the idea of shooting him never even entered my head. Instead of that, I gave his arm a terrific blow with the side of my hand and, handing off another Malay who had stopped in front of me, I shouted, 'Go like mad!' to Haywood and pedalled furiously down the road. The Malay shot four times. His third shot succeeded in bursting my back tyre and hitting the muscle of my left calf, so that the leg was completely useless. By this time we were well ahead, and though my flat tyre made an appalling noise, I held on to Haywood and we soon caught up Tan Chen King and Ah Loy, who had hurried back on hearing the shooting.

The moment we reached the dark shadow of some rubber trees on the left of the road, I stopped the party and we clambered a short distance up a steep bank and waited. Soon two of the Malays rode up and we opened fire with our pistols. (I had sent the Tommy-gun back to the Batu Caves camp, as it was so awkward to carry on a bicycle and at that time the roads had been quite deserted at night.) The Chinese shot before I gave the order, but we dropped the leading Malay ten yards in front of us. He was a very brave man, for as he lay he fired two barrels a

us and then crawled away into a dense patch of jungle bananas on the other side of the road.

The other two Malays had by now disappeared and we were afraid that they were holding the other Chinese. Haywood and I thought we ought to try and rescue him—especially as he had all the tinned food we had brought from the dump at the 20th Mile, but Tan Chen King said he must look after himself.

It was already about 3.0 a.m. and we were afraid that the whole neighbourhood would have been roused by the shooting and that the other Malays would ring up the Japs at Bentong, who would then be waiting for us at Kampong Ketari only six miles ahead; so the first thing we did was to cut the telegraph wires. If it had not been for the wound in my leg, we should have returned to the 78th Mile and walked seven miles due east along the Forest Reserve boundary which led right to our destination —Haywood's old camp at Sungei Gow. But my ca was bleeding profusely and was already extreme painful. The bone seemed to be untouched, but t injury to the muscle made the ankle numb and u less. As it was too dark to dig out the shot, we t on a first-field-dressing and hoped for the best. then hid my ruined bicycle carefully, in case owner should be traced, and taking the Ma bicycle from the road, I sat on it and was t along by Ah Loy who was as strong as a mule. ing there was no sentry at Kampong Ketar passed it without any trouble and had the surpr good fortune to reach the Sungei Gow

before dawn without meeting a single person on the road—or so we thought.

As soon as it was light enough we washed the blood from my leg and discovered that the wound consisted of a single large hole. Tan Chen King then made a probe and pair of forceps out of bamboo and started excavating the wound. Fortunately I fainted and was thus spared the pain. When I came to, I found that they had extracted a half-inch motor-car nut—apparently the Malay had made up his own cartridges—and I was extremely grateful that none of his shots at close range had found their mark. Haywood told me that Ah Wan had chewed up some leaves from a certain tree and, filling his mouth with stream water and holding a piece of bamboo between *his lips, had thoroughly syringed the wound.* His somewhat primitive surgery—perhaps aided by the iodine from my medical set—was certainly very effective, for though I could not move the ankle without great pain for some days, the wound never showed any sign of going septic and the swelling gradually subsided.

We now had only two miles to go to reach the house of the Chinese called John who had formerly helped Haywood and his party; but we found that a series of clearings had been opened up since we were last here and instead of following a pleasant jungle track we had to crawl under and over a maze of newly cut bamboo, treacherously slippery with the early morning dew. I can remember few more unpleasant three hours in my whole life.

MAN-EATERS OF KUMAON

Introductory Note

Colonel Jim Corbett was a hunter who enjoyed pursuing wild life with a camera rather than a gun. But a very real service is performed to a native district when such a skilled and experienced hunter takes down his guns in pursuit of a man-eater. For the life of whole areas can become completely disorganised, so devastating is the presence of a man-eating tiger or panther. No man in the past thirty years achieved so great a reputation for this highly dangerous type of hunting as Corbett. He gained it by his entire fearlessness, very true knowledge of jungle life and what one can only call a sixth sense which tells the born hunter what to do at any given moment.

Corbett was born in India in 1875, the second youngest of thirteen children. There he was educated, not only in school but also in the natural law of the jungle. An older brother taught him at an early age how to shoot and to move about in the pursuit of game. From the age of nineteen until the outbreak of World War I he worked for a railway company, being in charge of big groups of natives by whom he was held in considerable veneration.

During World War I, Corbett recruited 4000 men

om the Kumaon Hills to serve as a Labour Corps n France and himself led a unit of 500 men to the Western Front—the first man to go there from the United Provinces.

Corbett killed his first man-eater in 1907. But the claims of business prevented him from devoting much time to hunting until 1924 when an inheritance enabled him to throw over his business interests and to devote himself to jungle life. The killing of animals was never his chief interest—a cine-camera gave him far greater pleasure, as, whistling some bird song to deaden the whir, he stood as close as 10 ft. to the tiger in pursuit of great photography.

At the age of 64, he again joined the Army for World War II, and at its close was training soldiers in jungle warfare. Colonel Corbett died in 1955.

Jim Corbett's book, *Man-eaters of Kumaon*, must give the most intense pleasure to an animal-lover, for an amazing fund of knowledge about animals is poured into it. The very chapter headings are exciting — 'The Champawat Man-Eater', 'The Bachelor of Powalgarh' (he was a wonderful beast, over ten feet long and for a decade the most sought-after big game trophy in the United Provinces), 'The Pipal Pani Tiger'. He tells the tale of the hunting-down and dispatch of all the more dangerous man-eaters in the Kumaon area over the past thirty years; one, for instance, killed sixty-four people within five years. Nevertheless, Colonel Corbett i always anxious to defend the personality of the tige —a killer, he asserts, only through dire necessity.

A MAN AND HIS DOG

I never saw either of his parents. The Knight of the Broom I purchased him from said he was a spaniel, that his name was Pincha, and that his father was a 'keen gun dog'. This is all I can tell you about his pedigree.

I did not want a pup, and it was quite by accident that I happened to be with a friend when the litter of seven was decanted from a very filthy basket for her inspection. Pincha was the smallest and the thinnest of the litter, and it was quite evident he had reached the last ditch in his fight for survival. Leaving his little less miserable brothers and sisters, he walked once round me, and then curled himself up between my big feet. When I picked him up and put him inside my coat—it was a bitterly cold morning—he tried to show his gratitude by licking my face, and I tried to show him I was not aware of his appalling stench.

He was rising three months then, and I bought him for fifteen rupees. He is rising thirteen years now, and all the gold in India would not buy him.

When I got him home, and he had made his first acquaintance with a square meal, warm water, and soap, we scrapped his kennel name of Pincha and rechristened him Robin, in memory of a faithful old collie, who had saved my young brother, aged four and myself, aged six, from the attack of an infuriated she-bear.

obin responded to regular meals as parched land to rain, and after he had been with us for a few ks, acting on the principle that a boy's and a 's training cannot be started too early, I took him one morning, intending to get a little away from n and fire a shot or two to get him used to the und of gunfire.

At the lower end of our estate there are some ense thorn bushes, and while I was skirting round hem a peafowl got up and, forgetting all about Robin who was following at heel, I brought the bird fluttering down. It landed in the thorn bushes and Robin dashed in after it. The bushes were too thick and thorny for me to enter them, so I ran round to the far side where beyond the bushes was open ground, and beyond that again heavy tree and grass jungle which I knew the wounded bird would make for. The open ground was flooded with morning sunlight, and if I had been armed with a movie camera I should have had an opportunity of securing a unique picture. The peafowl, an old hen, with neck feathers stuck out at right angles and one wing broken, making for the tree jungle, while Robin, with stern to the ground, was hanging on to her tail and being dragged along. Running forward I very foolishly caught the bird by the neck and lifted it clear of the ground, whereon it promptly lashed out with both legs and sent Robin heels-over-head. In a second he was up and on his feet again, and when I laid the dead bird down he danced round it making little dabs alternately at its head and tail. The lesson was over for that morning, and as we returned home it would

have been difficult to say which of us was the more proud—Robin, at bringing home his first bird, or I, at having picked a winner out of a filthy basket. The shooting season was now drawing to a close, and for the next few days Robin was not given anything larger than a quail, doves, and an occasional partridge to retrieve.

We spent the summer on the hills, and on our annual migration to the foothills in November, at the end of a long fifteen-mile march, as we turned a sharp corner, one of a big troop of langurs jumped off the hillside and crossed the road a few inches in front of Robin's nose. Disregarding my whistle, Robin dashed down the khudside after the langur, which promptly sought safety in a tree. The ground was open, with a few trees here and there, and after going steeply down for thirty or forty yards flattened out for a few yards before going sharply down into the valley below. On the right-hand side of this flat ground there were a few bushes, with a deep channel scoured out by rain-water running through them. Robin had hardly entered these bushes when he was out again, and with ears laid back and tail tucked in was running for dear life, with an enormous leopard bounding after him and gaining on him at every bound. I was unarmed, and all the assistance I could render was to 'Ho' and 'Har' at the full extent of my lungs. The men carrying M's dandy joined in lustily, the pandemonium reaching its climax when the hundred or more langurs added their alarm-calls, in varying keys. For twenty-five or thirty yards th[e] desperate and unequal race continued, and just as th[e]

leopard was within reach of Robin, it unaccountably swerved and disappeared into the valley, while Robin circled round a shoulder of the hill and rejoined us on the road. Two very useful lessons Robin learned from his hairbreadth escape, which he never in after-life forgot. First, that it was dangerous to chase langurs, and, second, that the alarm-call of a langur denoted the presence of a leopard.

Robin resumed his training where it had been interrupted in spring, but it soon became apparent that his early neglect and starvation had affected his heart, for he fainted now after the least exertion.

There is nothing more disappointing for a gun dog than to be left at home when his master goes out, and as bird-shooting was now taboo for Robin I started taking him with me when I went out after big game. He took to this new form of sport as readily as a duck takes to water, and from then on has accompanied me whenever I have been out with a rifle.

The method we employ is to go out early in the morning, pick up the tracks of a leopard or a tiger, and follow them. When the pug marks can be seen I do the tracking, and when the animal we are after takes to the jungle Robin does the tracking. In this way we have on occasions followed an animal for miles before coming up with it.

When shooting on foot it is very much easier to kill an animal outright than when shooting down on it from a machan, or from the back of an elephant. For one thing when wounded animals have to be followed up on foot, chance shots are not indulged in, and, for another, the vital parts are more accessible

when shooting on the same level as the animal than when shooting down on it. However, even after exercising the greatest care over the shot, I have sometimes only wounded leopards and tigers, who have rampaged round before being quietened by a second or third shot, and only once during all the years that we have shot together has Robin left me in a tight corner. When he rejoined me after his brief absence that day we decided that the incident was closed and would never be referred to again, but we are older now and possibly less sensitive; anyway, Robin—who has exceeded the canine equivalent of three-score years and ten, and who lies at my feet as I write, on a bed he will never again leave—has with a smile from his wise brown eyes and a wag of his small stump of a tail given me permission to go ahead and tell you the story.

We did not see the leopard until it stepped clear of the thick undergrowth and, coming to a stand, looked back over its left shoulder.

He was an outsized male with a beautiful dark glossy coat, the rosettes on his skin standing out like clear-cut designs on a rich velvet ground. I had an unhurried shot with an accurate rifle at his right shoulder, at the short range of fifteen yards. But how little I missed his heart makes no matter, and whil the bullet was kicking up the dust fifty yards away h was high in the air, and, turning a somersault, lande in the thick undergrowth he had a minute before lef For twenty, forty, fifty yards we heard him crashi through the cover, and then the sound ceased

abruptly as it had begun. This sudden cessation of sound could be accounted for in two ways: either the leopard had collapsed and died in his tracks, or fifty yards away he had reached open ground.

We had walked far that day; the sun was near setting and we were still four miles from home. This part of the jungle was not frequented by man, and there was not one chance in a million of anyone passing that way by night, and last, and the best reason of all for leaving the leopard, M. was unarmed and could neither be left alone nor taken along to follow up the wounded animal—so we turned to the north and made for home. There was no need for me to mark the spot, for I had walked through these jungles by day—and often by night—for near on half a century, and could have found my way blindfold to any part of them.

Night had only just given place to day the following morning when Robin—who had not been with us the previous evening—and I arrived at the spot I had fired from. Very warily Robin, who was leading, examined the ground where the leopard had stood, and then raising his head and snuffing the air he advanced to the edge of the undergrowth, where the leopard in falling had left great splashes of blood. There was no need for me to examine the blood to determine the position of the wound, for at the short range I had fired at I had seen the bullet strike, and the spurt of dust on the far side was proof that the bullet had gone right through the leopard's body.

It might be necessary later on to follow up the blood trail, but just at present a little rest after our

four-mile walk in the dark would do no harm and might, on the other hand, prove of great value to us. The sun was near rising, and at that early hour of the morning all the jungle folk were on the move, and it would be advisable to hear what they had to say on the subject of the wounded animal before going further.

Under a nearby tree I found a dry spot to which the saturating dew had not penetrated, and with Robin stretched out at my feet had finished my cigarette when a chital hind, and then a second and a third, started calling some sixty yards to our left front. Robin sat up and slowly turning his head looked at me, and, on catching my eye, as slowly turned back in the direction of the calling deer. He had travelled far along the road of experience since that day he had first heard the alarm-call of a langur, and he knew now—as did every bird and animal within hearing—that the chital were warning the jungle folk of the presence of a leopard.

From the manner in which the chital were calling it was evident that the leopard was in full view of them. A little more patience and they would tell us if he was alive. They had been calling for about five minutes when suddenly, and all together, they called once and again, and then settled down to their regula call; the leopard was alive and had moved, and wa now quiet again. All that we needed to know no was the position of the leopard, and this informatio we could get by stalking the chital.

Moving down-wind for fifty yards we entered t thick undergrowth, and started to stalk the deer

not a difficult task, for Robin can move through any jungle as silently as a cat, and long practice has taught me where to place my feet. The chital were not visible until we were within a few feet of them. They were standing in the open and looking towards the north in the exact direction, as far as I was able to judge, in which the crashing sound of the evening before had ceased.

Up to this point the chital had been of great help to us; they had told us the leopard was lying out in the open and that it was alive, and they had now given us the direction. It had taken us the best part of an hour to acquire this information, and if the chital now caught sight of us and warned the jungle folk of our presence, they would in one second undo the good they had so far done. I was debating whether it would be better to retrace our steps and work down below the calling deer and try to get a shot from behind them, or move them from our vicinity by giving the call of a leopard, when one of the hinds turned her head and looked straight into my face. Next second, with a cry of 'Ware man', they dashed away at top speed. I had only about five yards to cover to reach the open ground, but quick as I was the leopard was quicker, and I was only in time to see his hind quarters and tail disappearing behind some bushes. The chital had very effectively spoilt my chance of a shot, and the leopard would now have to be located and marked down all over again—this time by Robin.

I stood on the open ground for some minutes, to give the leopard time to settle down and the scent

he had left in his passage to blow past us, and then took Robin due west across the track of the wind, which was blowing from the north. We had gone about sixty or seventy yards when Robin, who was leading, stopped and turned to face into the wind. Robin is mute in the jungles, and has a wonderful control over his nerves. There is one nerve, however, running down the back of his hind legs, which he cannot control when he is looking at a leopard, or when the scent of a leopard is warm and strong. This nerve was now twitching, and agitating the long hair on the upper part of his hind legs.

A very violent cyclonic storm had struck this part of the forest the previous summer, uprooting a number of trees; it was towards one of these fallen trees, forty yards from where we were standing, that Robin was now looking. The branches were towards us, and on either side of the trunk there were light bushes and a few scattered tufts of short grass.

At any other time Robin and I would have made straight for our quarry; but on this occasion a little extra caution was advisable. Not only were we dealing with an animal who when wounded knows no fear but, in addition, we were dealing with a leopard who had had fifteen hours in which to nurse his grievance against man, and who could in consequence be counted on to have all his fighting instincts thoroughly aroused.

When leaving home that morning I had picked up the .275 rifle I had used the previous evening. A good rifle to carry when miles have to be covered, but not the weapon one would select to deal with a

wounded leopard; so instead of a direct approach, I picked a line that would take us fifteen yards from, and parallel to, the fallen tree. Step by step, Robin leading, we moved along this line, and had passed the branches and were opposite the trunk when Robin stopped. Taking the direction from him, I presently saw what had attracted his attention—the tip of the leopard's tail slowly raised, and as slowly lowered—the warning a leopard invariably gives before charging. Pivoting to the right on my heels, I had just got the rifle to my shoulder when the leopard burst through the intervening bushes and sprang at us. My bullet, fired more with the object of deflecting him than with any hope of killing or even hitting him, passed under his belly and went through the fleshy part of his left thigh. The crack of the rifle, more than the wound, had the effect of deflecting the leopard sufficiently to make him pass my right shoulder without touching me, and before I could get in another shot he disappeared into the bushes beyond.

Robin had not moved from my feet, and together we now examined the ground the leopard had passed over. Blood was found in plenty, but whether it had come from the old wounds torn open by the leopard's violent exertions, or from my recent shot, it was impossible to say. Anyway, it made no difference to Robin, who without a moment's hesitation took up the trail. After going through some very heavy cover we came on knee-high undergrowth, and had proceeded about a couple of hundred yards when I saw the leopard get up in front of us, and before I could get the rifle to bear on him,

he disappeared under a lantana bush. This bush with its branches resting on the ground was as big as a cottage tent, and in addition to affording the leopard ideal cover gave him all the advantages for launching his next attack.

Robin and I had come very well out of our morning's adventure and it would have been foolish now, armed as I was, to pursue the leopard further, so without more ado we turned about and made for home.

Next morning we were back on the ground. From a very early hour Robin had been agitating to make a start, and, ignoring all the interesting smells the jungle holds in the morning, would have made me do the four miles at a run had that been possible.

I had armed myself with a 450/400, and was in consequence feeling much happier than I had done the previous day. When we were several hundred yards from the lantana bush, I made Robin slow down and advance cautiously, for it is never safe to assume that a wounded animal will be found where it has been left hours previously, as the following regrettable incident shows.

A sportsman of my acquaintance wounded a tiger one afternoon, and followed the blood trail for several miles along a valley. Next morning, accompanied by a number of men, one of whom was carrying his empty rifle and leading the way, he set out intending to take up the tracking where he had left off. His way led over the previous day's blood trail, and while still a mile from the spot where the tiger had beer left, the leading man, who incidentally was the loca

shikari, walked on to the wounded tiger and was killed. The rest of the party escaped, some by climbing trees and others by showing a clean pair of heels.

I had marked the exact position of the lantana bush, and now took Robin along a line that would pass a few yards on the lee side of it. Robin knew all that was worth knowing about this method of locating the position of an animal by cutting across the wind, and we had only gone a short distance, and were still a hundred yards from the bush, when he *stopped, turned and faced into the wind, and com*municated to me that he could smell the leopard. As on the previous day, he was facing a fallen tree which was lying along the edge of, and parallel to, the thick undergrowth through which we had followed the leopard to the lantana bush after he had charged us. On our side of the tree the ground was open, but on the far side there was a dense growth of waist-high basonta bushes. Having signalled to Robin to carry on along our original line, we went past the lantana bush, in which he showed no interest, to a channel washed out by rain-water. Here, removing my coat, I filled it with as many stones as the stitches would hold, and with this improvised sack slung over my shoulder returned to the open ground near the tree.

Resuming my coat, and holding the rifle ready for instant use, I took up a position fifteen yards from the tree and started throwing stones, first on to the tree and then into bushes on the far side of it with the object of making the leopard—assuming he was still

ve—charge on to the open ground where I could
al with him. When all my ammunition was
khausted I coughed, clapped my hands, and shouted,
ut neither during the bombardment nor after it did
he leopard move or make any sound to indicate that
he was alive.

I should now have been justified in walking straight up to the tree and looking on the far side of it, but remembering an old jungle saying, 'It is never safe to assume that a leopard is dead until it has been skinned', I set out to circle round the tree, intending to reduce the size of the circles until I could see right under the branches and along the whole length of the trunk. I made the radius of the first circle about twenty-five yards, and had gone two-thirds of the way round when Robin stopped. As I looked down to see what had attracted his attention, there was a succession of deep-throated, angry grunts, and the leopard made straight for us. All I could see was the undergrowth being violently agitated in a direct line towards us, and I only just had time to swing half right and bring the rifle up, when the head and shoulders of the leopard appeared out of the bushes a few yards away.

The leopard's spring and my shot were simultaneous, and side-stepping to the left and leaning back as far as I could, I fired the second barrel from my hip into his side as he passed me.

When a wounded animal, be he leopard or tiger, makes a headlong charge and fails to contact he invariably carries on and does not return to the attack until he is again disturbed.

I had side-stepped to the left to avoid crushing Robin, and when I looked down for him now he was nowhere to be seen. For the first time in all the years we had hunted together we had parted company in a tight corner, and he was now probably trying to find his way home, with very little chance of being able to avoid the many dangers that lay before him in the intervening four miles of jungle. Added to the natural dangers he would have to face in a jungle with which, owing to its remoteness from home, he was not familiar, was the weak condition of his heart. It was therefore with very great misgivings that I turned about to go in search of him, and as I did so I caught sight of his head projecting from behind a tree trunk at the edge of a small clearing a hundred yards away. When I raised my hand and beckoned, he disappeared into the undergrowth, but a little later, with drooped eyes and drooping ears, he crept silently to my feet. Laying down the rifle I picked him up in my arms and, for the second time in his life, he licked my face—telling me as he did so, with little throaty sounds, how glad he was to find me unhurt, and how terribly ashamed he was of himself for having parted company from me.

Our reactions to the sudden and quite unexpected danger that had confronted us were typical of how a canine and a human being act in an emergency, when the danger that threatens is heard and not seen. In Robin's case it had impelled him to seek safety in silent and rapid retreat; whereas in my case it had the effect of gluing my feet to the ground and

making retreat—rapid or otherwise—impossible.

When I had satisfied Robin that he was not to blame for our temporary separation, and his small body had stopped trembling, I put him down and together we walked up to where the leopard, who had put up such a game fight and had so nearly won the last round, was lying dead.

I have told you the story, and while I have been telling it Robin—the biggest-hearted and the most faithful friend man ever had—has gone to the Happy Hunting Grounds, where I know I shall find him waiting for me.

T. E. LAWRENCE



SEVEN PILLARS OF WISDOM

Introductory Note

Unlike the Second World War, the War of 1914-18 gave little scope for individual initiative. The fighting man was too hopelessly caught up in ponderous, steam-roller attacks on a vast scale in oceans of mud. Acts of heroism there were by the score; but these sputtered gloriously, momentarily, and vanished without affecting the battle in which weight of metal was overpowering manœuvre. To this, a notable exception was Lawrence of Arabia, a man to whom that overworked word genius can be applied with complete accuracy.

Lawrence was twenty-six at the outbreak of World War I. He had already won academic honours at Oxford and had travelled in Arabia on archæological survey. But so short of stature was he that he was given at the start of hostilities a sedentary job at the War Office. A more blatant example of misplacement it would be hard to imagine. By 1916, however, his knowledge of Arabia had not only got him posted to that area, but also on active service on behalf of the Arabs who were then starting their great revolt against the Turkish overlord. He became liaison officer and adviser to the Emir Feisal who was later to become King of Iraq.

The story of the Arab Revolt seen through Lawrence's acutely sensitive eyes is told with marvellous skill and power in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, one of the great books of the English language. He lived among the Arabs, wearing their dress and living as one of them. 'They taught me,' he writes, 'that no man could be their leader except he ate the ranks' food, wore their clothes, lived level with them, and yet appeared better in himself.' So like an Arab did he become that on one occasion he was captured by the Turks (but not recognised), forcibly enlisted in the Turkish army and beaten senseless. And this was at a time that there was a reward of £20,000 for his capture! In the night he escaped.

Train-wrecking took up a great deal of his time; he became very proficient at it, earning for himself the name of '*al Urans*, the destroyer of engines'. But his activities were by no means confined to this hazardous pursuit. With his Arabs he played a vitally important role in the final advance through Palestine into Syria which drove Turkey out of the war. The part he played was a great feat of arms.

Lawrence left the army as a colonel, and heavily decorated. But his disgust at the treatment meted out to the Arabs after the war made him return these decorations. However, as political adviser to Mr. Winston Churchill at the Colonial Office, he was able in 1922 to obtain a more just settlement for the men who had done much to help the allied cause. Satisfied, Lawrence enlisted in the ranks of the R.A.F. as A/C Shaw in order to escape the publicity which dogged his every move. For twelve years he

lived thus incognito, though his identity could not always be kept secret. He retired from the R.A.F. in February 1935 and in his little three-roomed cottage in Bovington, Dorset, was planning an exploration by bicycle of the scenery and monuments of England. But on May 13, swerving on the powerful motor-cycle which he rejoiced to ride at great speed, he was violently thrown and died without recovering consciousness.

Seven Pillars of Wisdom was first published privately, about a hundred copies being printed. It had suffered severe vicissitudes of fortune. The one and only manuscript, completed after months of intensive work, was left in the waiting-room at Reading Station and never found. Lawrence sat down and re-wrote the whole book—and it is a very long book. In accordance with his instructions, it was not published until after his death.

'Writing has been my inmost self all my life, and I can never put my full strength into anything else.' And so Lawrence poured the utmost power of his genius into writing: the result can be read in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and in his remarkable [illegible] A selection from Lawrence's writings has recently been made and published under the title *The Essential T. E. Lawrence*.

The extracts chosen here show two aspects of Lawrence—the one, the man of action, the other the man bound by [illegible] to the observance of native custom. Each is [illegible]

The derailment of the train, described in the second extract, took place after an [illegible]

previous day had resulted in near disaster; the exploder had failed to respond to Lawrence's finger pressure, as a Turkish troop train rolled by a few yards from his rather obvious hiding-place. Only quick action had saved his life. It is to this incident that Lawrence refers in the first two paragraphs of 'Something Attempted'.

FEAST

Meanwhile we would stay with Ali abu Fitna, moving gently northward with him towards Nebk, where Auda would tell all the Abu Tayi to collect. He would be back from Nuri before they were united. This was the business, and we laded six bags of gold into Auda's saddle-bags, and off he went. Afterwards the chiefs of the Fitenna waited on us, and said they were honoured to feast us twice a day, forenoon and sunset, so long as we remained with them; and they meant what they said. Howeitat hospitality was unlimited—no three-day niggardliness for them of the nominal desert law—and importunate, and left us no honourable escape from the entirety of the nomad's dream of well-being.

Each morning, between eight and ten, a little group of blood mares under an assortment of imperfect saddlery would come to our camping place, and on them Nasir, Nesib, Zeki and I would mount, and with perhaps a dozen of our men on foot would move solemnly across the valley by the sandy paths

between the bushes. Our horses were led by our servants, since it would be immodest to ride free or fast. So eventually we would reach the tent which was to be our feast-hall for that time; each family claiming us in turn, and bitterly offended if Zaal, the adjudicator, preferred one out of just order.

As we arrived, the dogs would rush out at us, and be driven off by onlookers—always a crowd had collected round the chosen tent—and we stepped in under the ropes to its guest half, made very large for the occasion and carefully dressed with its wall-curtain on the sunny side to give us the shade. The bashful host would murmur and vanish again out of sight. The tribal rugs, lurid red things from Beyrout, were ready for us, arranged down the partition curtain, along the back wall and across the dropped end, so that we sat down on three sides of an open dusty space. We might be fifty men in all.

The host would reappear, standing by the pole; our local fellow-guests, el Dheilan, Zaal and other sheikhs, reluctantly let themselves be placed on the rugs between us, sharing our elbow-room on the pack-saddles, padded with folded felt rugs, over which we leaned. The front of the tent was cleared, and the dogs were frequently chased away by excited children, who ran across the empty space pulling yet smaller children after them. Their clothes were less as their years were less, and their pot-bodies rounder. The smallest infants of all, out of their fly-black eyes, would stare at the company, gravely balanced on spread legs, stark-naked, sucking their thumbs and pushing out expectant bellies towards us.

Then would follow an awkward pause, which our friends would try to cover, by showing us on its perch the household hawk (when possible a sea-bird taken young on the Red Sea coast) or their watch-cockerel, or their greyhound. Once a tame ibex was dragged in for our admiration: another time an oryx. When these interests were exhausted they would try and find a small talk to distract us from the household noises, and from noticing the urgent whispered cookery-directions wafted through the dividing curtain with a powerful smell of boiled fat and drifts of tasty meat-smoke.

After a silence the host or a deputy would come forward and whisper 'Black or white?' an invitation for us to choose coffee or tea. Nasir would always answer 'Black', and the slave would be beckoned forward with the beaked coffee-pot in one hand, and three or four clinking cups of white ware in the other. He would dash a few drops of coffee into the uppermost cup, and proffer it to Nasir; then pour the second for me, and the third for Nesib; and pause while we turned the cups about in our hands, and sucked them carefully, to get appreciatively from them the last richest drop.

As soon as they were empty his hand was stretched to clap them noisily one above the other, and toss them out with a lesser flourish for the next guest in order, and so on round the assembly till all had drunk. Then back to Nasir again. This second cup would be tastier than the first, partly because th pot was yielding deeper from the brew, partly be cause of the heel-taps of so many previous drinker

present in the cups; whilst the third and fourth rounds, if the serving of the meat delayed so long, would be of surprising flavour.

However, at last, two men came staggering through the thrilled crowd, carrying the rice and meat on a tinned copper tray or shallow bath, five feet across, set like a great brazier on a foot. In the tribe there was only this one food-bowl of the size, and an incised inscription ran round it in florid Arabic characters: 'To the glory of God, and in trust of mercy at the last, the property of His poor suppliant, Auda abu Tayi.' It was borrowed by the host who was to entertain us for the time; and, since my urgent brain and body made me wakeful, from my blankets in the first light I would see the dish going across country, and by marking down its goal would know where we were to feed that day.

The bowl was now brim-full, ringed round its edge by white rice in an embankment a foot wide and six inches deep, filled with legs and ribs of mutton till they toppled over. It needed two or three victims to make in the centre a dressed pyramid of meat such as honour prescribed. The centre-pieces were the boiled, upturned heads, propped on their severed stumps of necks, so that the ears, brown like old leaves, flapped out on the rice surface. The jaws gaped emptily upward, pulled open to show the hollow throat with the tongue, still pink, clinging to the lower teeth; and the long incisors whitely crowned the pile, very prominent above the nostrils' pricking hair and the lips which sneered away blackly from them.

This load was set down on the soil of the cleared space between us, where it steamed hotly, while a procession of minor helpers bore small cauldrons and copper vats in which the cooking had been done. From them, with much-bruised bowls of enamelled iron, they ladled out over the main dish all the inside and outside of the sheep; little bits of yellow intestine, the white tail-cushion of fat, brown muscles and meat and bristly skin, all swimming in the liquid butter and grease of the seething. The bystanders watched anxiously, muttering satisfactions when a very juicy scrap plopped out.

The fat was scalding. Every now and then a man would drop his baler with an exclamation, and plunge his burnt fingers, not reluctantly, in his mouth to cool them: but they persevered till at last their scooping rang loudly on the bottoms of the pots; and, with a gesture of triumph, they fished out the intact livers from their hiding place in the gravy and topped the yawning jaws with them.

Two raised each smaller cauldron and tilted it, letting the liquid splash down upon the meat till the rice-crater was full, and the loose grains at the edge swam in the abundance: and yet they poured, till, amid cries of astonishment from us, it was running over; and a little pool congealing in the dust. That was the final touch of splendour, and the host called us to come and eat.

We feigned a deafness, as manners demanded: at last we heard him, and looked surprised at one another, each urging his fellow to move first; till Nasir rose coyly, and after him we all came forward

to sink on one knee round the tray, wedging in and cuddling up till the twenty-two for whom there was barely space were grouped around the food. We turned back our tight sleeves to the elbow, and, taking lead from Nasir with a low 'In the name of God the merciful, the loving-kind', we dipped together.

The first dip, for me, at least, was always cautious, since the liquid fat was so hot that my unaccustomed fingers could seldom bear it: and so I would toy with an exposed and cooling lump of meat till others' excavations had drained my rice-segment. We would knead between the fingers (not soiling the palm), neat balls of rice and fat and liver and meat cemented by gentle pressure, and project them by leverage of the thumb from the crooked fore-finger into the mouth. With the right trick and the right construction the little lump held together and came clean off the hand; but when surplus butter and odd fragments clung, cooling, to the fingers, they had to be licked carefully to make the next effort slip easier away.

As the meat pile wore down (nobody really cared about rice: flesh was the luxury) one of the chief Howeitat eating with us would draw his dagger, silver hilted, set with turquoise, a signed masterpiece of Mohammed ibn Zari, of Jauf, and would cut criss-cross from the larger bones long diamonds of meat easily torn up between the fingers; for it was necessarily boiled very tender, since all had to be disposed of with the right hand which alone was honourable.

Our host stood by the circle, encouraging the appetite with pious ejaculations. At top speed we twisted, tore, cut and stuffed: never speaking, since conversation would insult a meal's quality, though it was proper to smile thanks when an intimate guest passed a select fragment, or when Mohammed el Dheilan gravely handed over a huge barren bone with a blessing. On such occasions I would return the compliment with some hideous impossible lump of guts, a flippancy which rejoiced the Howeitat, but which the gracious, aristocratic Nasir saw with disapproval.

At length some of us were nearly filled, and began to play and pick; glancing sideways at the rest till they too grew slow, and at last ceased eating, elbow on knee, the hand hanging down from the wrist over the tray edge to drip, while the fat, butter and scattered grains of rice cooled into a stiff white grease which gummed the fingers together. When all had stopped, Nasir meaningly cleared his throat, and we rose up together in haste with an explosive 'God requite it you, O host', to group ourselves outside among the tent-ropes while the next twenty guests inherited our leaving.

Those of us who were nice would go to the end of the tent where the flap of the roof-cloth, beyond the last poles, drooped down as an end curtain; and on this clan handkerchief (whose coarse goat-hair mesh was pliant and glossy with much use) would scrape the thickest of the fat from the hands. Then we would make back to our seats, and re-take them sighingly; while the slaves, leaving aside their

portion, the skulls of the sheep, would come round our rank with a wooden bowl of water, and a coffee-cup as dipper, to splash over our fingers, while we rubbed them with the tribal soap-cake.

Meantime the second and third sittings by the dish were having their turn, and then there would be one more cup of coffee, or a glass of syrup-like tea; and at last the horses would be brought and we would slip out to them, and mount, with a quiet blessing to the hosts as we passed by. When our backs were turned the children would run in disorder upon the ravaged dish, tear our gnawed bones from one another, and escape into the open with valuable fragments to be devoured in security behind some distant bush: while the watchdogs of all the camp prowled round snapping, and the master of the tent fed the choicest offal to his greyhound.



SOMETHING ATTEMPTED

Mifleh was past tears, thinking I had intentionally let the train through; and when the Serahin had been told the real cause they said 'Bad luck is with us'. Historically they were right; but they meant it for a prophecy, so I made sarcastic reference to their courage at the bridge the week before, hinting that it might be a tribal preference to sit on camel-guard. At once there was uproar, the Serahin attacking me furiously, the Beni Sakhr defending. Ali heard the trouble, and came running.

When we had made it up the original despondency was half forgotten. Ali backed me nobly, though the wretched boy was blue with cold and shivering in an attack of fever. He gasped that their ancestor the Prophet had given to Sherifs the faculty of 'sight', and by it he knew that our luck was turning. This was comfort for them: my first instalment of good fortune came when in the wet, without other tool than my dagger, I got the box of the exploder open and persuaded its electrical gear to work properly once more.

We returned to our vigil by the wires, but nothing happened, and evening drew down with more squalls and beastliness, everybody full of grumbles. There was no train; it was too wet to light a cooking fire; our only potential food was camel. Raw meat did not tempt anyone that night; and so our beasts survived to the morrow.

Ali lay down on his belly, which position lessened the hunger-ache, trying to sleep off his fever. Khazen, Ali's servant, lent him his cloak for extra covering. For a spell I took Khazen under mine, but soon found it becoming crowded. So I left it to him and went downhill to connect up the exploder. Afterwards I spent the night there alone by the singing telegraph wires, hardly wishing to sleep, so painful was the cold. Nothing came all the long hours, and dawn, which broke wet, looked even uglier than usual. We were sick to death of Minifir, of railways, of train watching and wrecking, by now. I climbed up to the main body while the early patrol searched the railway. Then the day cleared a little. Ali awoke,

much refreshed, and his new spirit cheered us. Hamud, the slave, produced some sticks which he had kept under his clothes by the skin all night. They were nearly dry. We shaved down some blasting gelatine, and with its hot flame got a fire going, while the Sukhur hurriedly killed a mangy camel, the best spared of our riding-beasts, and began with entrenching tools to hack it into handy joints.

Just at that moment the watchman on the north cried a train. We left the fire and made a breathless race of the six hundred yards down hill to our old position. Round the bend, whistling its loudest, came the train, a splendid two-engined thing of twelve passenger coaches, travelling at top speed on the favouring grade. I touched off under the first driving wheel of the first locomotive, and the explosion was terrific. The ground spouted blackly into my face, and I was sent spinning, to sit up with the shirt torn to my shoulder and the blood dripping from long ragged scratches on my left arm. Between my knees lay the exploder, crushed under a twisted sheet of sooty iron. In front of me was the scalded and smoking upper half of a man. When I peered through the dust and steam of the explosion the whole boiler of the first engine seemed to be missing.

I dully felt that it was time to get away to support; but when I moved, learnt that there was a great pain in my right foot, because of which I could only limp along, with my head swinging from the shock. Movement began to clear away this confusion, as I hobbled towards the upper valley, whence the Arabs were now shooting fast into the crowded coaches.

Dizzily I cheered myself by repeating aloud in English ' Oh, I wish this hadn't happened '.

When the enemy began to return our fire, I found myself much between the two. Ali saw me fall, and thinking that I was hard hit, ran out, with Turki and about twenty men of his servants and the Beni Sakhr, to help me. The Turks found their range and got seven of them in a few seconds. The others, in a rush, were about me—fit models, after their activity, for a sculptor. Their full white cotton drawers drawn in, bell-like, round their slender waists and ankles, their hairless brown bodies; and the love-locks plaited tightly over each temple in long horns, made them look like Russian dancers.

We scrambled back into cover together, and there, secretly, I felt myself over, to find I had not once been really hurt; though besides the bruises and cuts of the boiler-plate and a broken toe, I had five different bullet-grazes on me (some of them uncomfortably deep) and my clothes ripped to pieces.

From the watercourse we could look about. The explosion had destroyed the arched head of the culvert, and the frame of the first engine was lying beyond it, at the near foot of the embankment down which it had rolled. The second locomotive had toppled into the gap, and was lying across the ruined tender of the first. Its bed was twisted. I judged them both beyond repair. The second tender had disappeared over the further side; and the first three waggons had telescoped and were smashed in pieces. The rest of the train was badly derailed, with the listing coaches butted end to end at all angles, zig-

zagged along the track. One of them was a saloon, decorated with flags. In it had been Mehmed Jemal Pasha, commanding the Eighth Army Corps, hurrying down to defend Jerusalem against Allenby. His chargers had been in the first waggon; his motor-car was on the end of the train, and we shot it up. Of his staff we noticed a fat ecclesiastic, whom we thought to be Assad Shukair, Imam to Ahmed Jemal Pasha, and a notorious pro-Turk pimp. So we blazed at him till he dropped.

It was all long bowls. We could see that our chances of carrying the wreck were slight. There had been some four hundred men on board, and the survivors, now recovered from the shock, were under shelter and shooting hard at us. At the first moment our party on the north spur had closed, and nearly won the game. Mifleh on his mare chased the officers from the saloon into the lower ditch. He was too excited to stop and shoot, and so they got away scathless. The Arabs following him had turned to pick up some of the rifles and medals littering the ground, and then to drag bags and boxes from the train. If we had had a machine gun posted to cover the far side, according to my mining practice, not a Turk would have escaped.

Mifleh and Adhub rejoined us on the hill, and asked after Fahad. One of the Serahin told how he had led the first rush, while I lay knocked out beside the exploder, and had been killed near it. They showed his belt and rifle as proof that he was dead and that they had tried to save him. Adhub said not a word, but leaped out of the gully, and raced down-

hill. We caught our breaths till our lungs hurt us, watching him; but the Turks seemed not to see. A minute later he was dragging a body behind the left-hand bank.

Mifleh went back to his mare, mounted, and took her down behind a spur. Together they lifted the inert figure on to the pommel, and returned. A bullet had passed through Fahad's face, knocking out four teeth, and gashing the tongue. He had fallen unconscious, but had revived just before Adhub reached him, and was trying on hands and knees, blinded with blood, to crawl away. He now recovered poise enough to cling to a saddle. So they changed him to the first camel they found and led him off at once.

The Turks, seeing us so quiet, began to advance up the slope. We let them come half-way, and then poured in volleys which killed some twenty and drove the others back. The ground about the train was strewn with dead, and the broken coaches had been crowded: but they were fighting under eye of their Corps Commander, and undaunted began to work round the spurs to outflank us.

We were now only about forty left, and obviously could do no good against them. So we ran in batches up the little stream-bed, turning at each sheltered angle to delay them by pot-shots. Little Turki much distinguished himself by quick coolness, though his straight-stocked Turkish cavalry carbine made him so expose his head that he got four bullets through hi head-cloth. Ali was angry with me for retirin slowly. In reality my raw hurts crippled me, but t

hide from him this real reason I pretended to be easy, interested in and studying the Turks. Such successive rests while I gained courage for a new run kept him and Turki far behind the rest.

At last we reached the hill-top. Each man there jumped on the nearest camel, and made away at full speed eastward into the desert, for an hour. Then in safety we sorted our animals. The excellent Rahail, despite the ruling excitement, had brought off with him, tied to his saddle-girth, a huge haunch of the camel slaughtered just as the train arrived. He gave us the motive for a proper halt, five miles farther on, as a little party of four camels appeared marching in the same direction. It was our companion, Matar, coming back from his home village to Azrak with loads of raisins and peasant delicacies.

So we stopped at once, under a large rock in Wadi Dhuleil, where was a barren fig-tree, and cooked our first meal for three days. There, also, we bandaged up Fahad, who was sleepy with the lassitude of his severe hurt. Adhub, seeing this, took one of Matar's new carpets, and doubling it across the camel-saddle, stitched the ends into great pockets. In one they laid Fahad, while Adhub crawled into the other as make-weight: and the camel was led off southward towards their tribal tents.

The other wounded men were seen to at the same time. Meanwhile we whole ones refreshed ourselves. I bought another mangy camel for extra meat, paid rewards, compensated the relatives of the killed, and gave prize-money, for the sixty or seventy rifles we had taken. It was small booty, but not to be despised.

Some Serahin, who had gone into the action without rifles, able only to throw unavailing stones, had now two guns apiece. Next day we moved into Azrak, having a great welcome, and boasting—God forgive us—that we were victors.

BRENSHAM VILLAGE

[illegible] Note

John Moore [illegible] country, knows about the [illegible] the country. And his knowledge [illegible] deeper than a knowledge of [illegible] subtleties of field sport, of the [illegible] In these matters he discourses readily [illegible] that would confound anyone [illegible]. There is, however, more to it than that. [illegible] with his work brings home the fact that Moore [illegible] understands the country and can put that [illegible] into words which bring the countryside into the reader's mind with refreshing vividness. He lives near Tewkesbury, that lovely town on the junction of Avon and Severn, and it is of this part of England that he writes in *Brensham Village.* In fact the Elmbury he writes of ' among its fat green meadows ' is Tewkesbury, while Brensham is based on Bredon village. Neither, however, is an exact portrait, being half fact and half fiction.

The book might be described as a novel with a strong basis of fact. The hero is the village; we trace its story and the story of its inhabitants through the thirties, through the Second World [illegible] ar [illegible] catch a brief glimpse of the Peace in [illegible] of the characters really did exist—the [illegible]

instance, and the rogues Pistol, Bardolph and Nym.

John Moore is, however, writing something more than a semi-fictitious tale of an English village. He is tracing the changes that have affected our countryside in the last thirty years—the encroachment of the town, the decay of rural crafts, the exploitation of land by big business interests. He sees much that is sad in these changes, yet writes of them with a kindly tolerance and not with bitterness and despair.

There is much in the book of Brensham Hill; it is from a tower on that hill that the 'bird's eye view' is taken. Bredon Hill is his model—that Bredon Hill of which A. E. Housman wrote—

'In summertime on Bredon
The bells they sound so clear;
Round both the shires they ring them
In steeples far and near,
A happy noise to hear.'

On a clear day the view from the top of the hill commands twelve counties, and the 'distant cathedral' to which Moore refers might be Worcester, Gloucester or Hereford.

Except for a period as a Fleet Air Arm pilot in the war, John Moore has been writing books and articles for the press since 1930. All his writing has been of the English countryside. *Brensham Village* is the second of a series of which the first was *Portrait of Elmbury*, the story of a market town during the period between the two World Wars.

CRACK-BRAINED VILLAGE

By then I was a tough little schoolboy with three tough little friends, Dick, Donald and Ted, and a ferret called Boanerges, which I carried everywhere in my pocket, sometimes in company with a grass-snake, to the discomfiture of both. We rode to Brensham, for the first time, on the bicycles which were tenth-birthday presents, and thereafter spent most of our holidays there.

I had got to know Elmbury as only an inquisitive small boy can know the place where he is born and bred; so I was ready for further exploring. I had caught striped perch and loggerheaded chub in the rivers and streams which ran round Elmbury and through it, found larks' and curlews' nests in the big meadow called the Ham, climbed the four-hundred-odd steps to the top of the Abbey tower and gazed upon the coloured counties spread out below. I had achieved immortal infamy by scratching my name with a pen-knife on the sandstone wall of the Abbey. (It is still there.) And I had investigated, unknown to my parents, the rabbit-warren slums of the old country-town and made friends with many of the curious and disreputable characters who inhabited them: with Slosher Hook, who waged war against his wife daily at the entrance to Double Alley, giving and getting blow for blow while the neighbours applauded and jeered; with Black Sal, who'd lost her wits and

given up washing and who flapped about the town squawking and cackling like an old black crow; with numberless small ruffians who had filthy faces, ringworm on their heads, rickets in their bones, bottoms showing through ragged trousers, but who knew so much more about Life than I did that they seemed positively heroic. I also got to know those three musketeers whom I have since called Pistol, Bardolph and Nym. They were famous thieves, drunkards, beggars and scroungers who had served without distinction in various wars for what they could get out of it; they were just back from the Great War, and were already cocking a bleary and appraising eye at Peace to see what they could get out of that. They taught me a lot about rabbit snares and catapults, some merry rhymes, and some wicked swear-words; therefore they possessed in my eyes a sort of ragged nobility of which time and riper experience hasn't quite robbed them yet.

Now among the politer expressions which I learned from these rascals, among the alley catchwords, the scraps of cant and rhyming slang, and the old country names of things and places which often sounded like, and sometimes were, the uncorrupted speech of Shakespeare, there was a phrase which made me prick up my ears as soon as I heard it: 'As crack-brained as a Brensham hare.' Black Sal went flapping by, and Pistol shrugged his shoulders: 'As crack-brained as a Brensham hare.'

'Are there lots of hares on Brensham?' I asked eagerly.

'Lor' bless you, yes! Great fat lollopers! We

knows!' He winked at Bardolph and Nym, who repeated darkly:

'Aye, we knows summat about 'em!'

'What do you know?' I said.

'As they're good to yut,' said Pistol, grinning and rubbing his belly.

'But why are they crack-brained?'

'All hares is crack-brained. Come to that, 'most everybody at Brensham is crack-brained. 'Tis a crazy place.'

'Tain't like any other village,' said Bardolph. 'There's summat about it.'

'The folks is as wild as the hares,' said Nym.

'And very proud and independent-like,' put in Pistol.

'Three pubs they've got,' said Bardolph with a gleam in his eyes.

'There's more drink drunk in Brensham,' said Nym, 'than anywhere else I knows of.'

'Fine upstanding women they have,' leered Pistol.

'And great folks they are for horses, and cricket, and dogs, and boats and fishing, and fighting and all kinds of sport,' said Nym.

'They hangs together,' said Bardolph.

'Aye, they hangs together wonderful,' agreed Pistol. 'Pick a quarrel with a Brensham man and the whole village'll set on you.'

'Dogs and all,' said Bardolph solemnly.

'And they've got a mad lord,' said Nym.

'A real lord?' I asked.

'Aye. And mad. Crack-brained as a Brensham hare.'

So before I ever set foot in Brensham I already knew it as a remarkable and far-famed place, completely different in character from all the other villages and hamlets which ringed Elmbury and were her satellites. Upon the green slopes of the hill hares lolloped, Pistol, Bardolph and Nym slunk down the hedgerows, set snares, and were remorselessly hunted (if their tales were to be believed) by giant keepers with knobbly sticks and savage dogs; and there was a mad lord. There were also fallow deer, we were told, which ran wild there, having escaped from his lordship's demesne. And if fallow deer, what else might inhabit the place, what birds, beasts, butterflies, what hoopoes, what golden orioles, what fire-crested wrens, what polecats, martens, adders, lizards, Camberwell Beauties, Queen of Spain fritillaries, Bath Whites? I knew, already, my natural history books by heart; and I peopled Brensham Hill with all the rarest creatures I could think of. It would not be at all surprising to discover Camberwell Beauties in company with a mad lord.

Moreover, there were other fabulous people besides the lord. There had been a murder in Brensham fifty years ago—the house where it had happened was still there, tumbledown and unoccupied, and was called the Murder House; and the family of the murderer and the family of the murdered person still survived and carried on the ancient feud! There was also a hermit, we were reliably informed, who lived in the tower at the top of the hill—Brensham Folly—and caught rabbits with his bare hands, and ate them raw. And fabulous indeed was the Colonel, who had

a farm at Brensham and whom we saw almost every day, and usually twice a day, as he passed down Elmbury High Street on his way to the Swan Hotel. He rode, in those days, upon a very old motor-cycle which made a peculiar and distinctive chuffling noise. He sat up very straight, as he had doubtless been taught to do in the Cavalry before the Boer War. He wore a faded green jacket, knee-breeches, and a deerstalker hat: a suit which, with trifling differences in the cut, might have been made for Robin Hood. But his face, as much of it as was visible between his chin-high muffler and the long peak of his deerstalker, was not like Robin Hood's at all. It was fire-red, save for the nose, which was purple. Below the nose was a badger-grizzled walrus moustache, which in winter became hoar with frost. Between the nose and the peak of his hat one could sometimes see his eyes, which were extraordinarily blue and twinkling. The general effect was curiously elfin or gnome-like. His jacket had big poacher's pockets which bulged with hares, rabbits, wild ducks and pheasants in season, and at all seasons with bottles of whisky.

For it was whisky, whispered Old Nanny, hinted our parents, declared with a leer lean spidery Pistol —whisky that beckoned the old gentleman twice daily to the Swan, sustained him in winter as he chuffled home in frost or snow, revived him when he came back from wading knee-deep through icy waters in pursuit of wild-fowl. It was the fire from the bottle, they said, that burnt in his glowing cheeks, the bottle was the paint-pot which decorated his purple nose!

But we brats were no moralists. The Colonel was weird and wonderful, he belonged to the greenwood we were sure, he had some obscure affinity with Robin Hood. He was scarcely ever to be seen without some article of sporting impedimenta strapped to his motor-bicycle or slung over his shoulder; fishing-baskets, guns, salmon-rods, otter-poles, cartridge-bags, even rat-traps! In winter when snow lay on the ground he even appeared, on his way to stalk geese, in his sister's night-shirt, with a white night-cap on his head. It was said that when he failed to borrow a night-shirt he obtained a shroud and wore that. If such beings as he must feed on whisky, that only made them more marvellous in our eyes.



BIRD'S EYE VIEW

We weren't very interested in the twelve counties, nor in the small smudge or speck which to the eye of faith represented a distant cathedral. We liked, it was true, to glance briefly beyond the serpentine Severn and the small silver glint of Wye to the mountains of Wales which looked Black indeed when the red sun was sinking behind them; but always before long our eyes came back home, to the roads we already knew and the lanes we were learning, to Elmbury among its fat green meadows and Brensham village among its leafy orchards.

Could we make out Tudor House where I lived, in Elmbury High Street? or Donald's house at the

end of the town? Dick's and Ted's, with lawns running down to the river? We often thought so; for there were the awful unmistakable alleys and slums, tight-packed tiny roofs which looked like rows of pigstyes (and, almost, they were). There was the cattle-market, an oblong open space which seethed like an anthill on Fair Days. There was the Swan Hotel where the Colonel, if it was open, would be drinking whisky, and there the flour-mills with the rivers winding past them, rivers which wound about the town so crookedly that they seemed to tie it up in an untidy parcel. And there, rising over all, was the Abbey with its fine tower which always caught whatever light there was and glowed reddish-gold or tawny because long ago a great fire had enveloped it, marking it for ever where the red tongues had licked.

Then in search of more landmarks the eye crept back towards Brensham village, following the white unmetalled road which was our way from Elmbury to the hill, tracing our familiar route past the church with the tall delicate spire, the three poplar trees, the Horse Narrow, the Bell, Mrs. Doan's Post Office, the Adam and Eve, the railway station close beside it with the bright-glinting track running through it straight as a steel rod.

Look: the Colonel's farm. Ayrshire cows in the meadows, beautifully pied, hardly distinguishable sometimes from cloud-shadows; piebald horses; Gloster spot pigs; weird unfamiliar dappled sheep from Spain; a flutter of Plymouth Rock hens in the orchard—for everything that walked upon the Colonel's farm, including his dogs and even the

cats, had to be pied. It was one of his fads, we were told. His house, like most of our houses, was half-timbered. His farm wagons, his drays, his larger implements, were painted cream-and-black. Even the petrol-tank of his old motor-cycle was striped like a zebra. Crazy, people said: crack-brained as a Brensham hare. But to us, as we looked down upon his Noah's Ark farm, it seemed entirely reasonable that a man should indulge such a pleasant whim if he wanted to.

These easy, simplified judgments of our elders often dismayed and bewildered us. There was, for example, the matter of the Mad Lord. Round the shoulder of the hill—you could just see it from the Folly roof—was the big, beautiful Georgian mansion where he lived. The original Orris Manor had been burned down two hundred years ago; the present one dated from 1760. It was built in the semblance of a castle but with a grace and lightness which no genuine castle possesses; and it was tumbling down. Turrets and parapets were crumbling away, a chimney leaned drunkenly and some broken panes in the top-storey windows had been repaired with brown paper so that they looked like empty eye sockets staring blindly down towards the village. Several trees were down in the park, the arch which bridged the moat had collapsed into the water, a dam had burst and turned half the garden into a bog. Nor was this surprising for the moat had been made in the steep hillside by damming a stream and contained its muddy water in flat defiance of the laws of hydraulics.

It was incredible that a lord should inhabit such a

ruin; but when we inquired the reason we were told simply: 'You see, he has no money.' That was another shock to us; we had always thought that lords and great wealth were inseparable. However, it was explained that he had possessed some money once, but he hadn't known how to look after it, cheats and moneylenders had robbed him of it, rascals had 'borrowed' it, beggars had begged it; there was hardly any left. Poor as a church mouse and mad as a hatter was the Mad Lord Orris of Brensham. We asked wonderingly: 'In what way is he mad?' and got the puzzling answer: 'You see, he doesn't think money matters; he actually doesn't mind being poor.' We pondered this *obiter dictum* and I am glad to say that even at the age of ten we were able to see the flaw in it. Our secret friends of the Elmbury alleys, Pistol, Bardolph, Nym and their kind, hardly ever had a penny to bless themselves with nor seemed to care for money at all—whatever they got by begging and scrounging they spent in the pub within a few hours; and yet it was apparent to us that they were completely sane. Therefore, we reasoned, the Mad Lord was probably sane too; he was merely a more eminent Pistol, a refinement of Bardolph, a lordlier Nym. We remembered how he had swept off his hat to us when we opened the gate for him, how he had smiled at us as he rode away, and we decided that, mad or sane, he came into our category of Special People, which included the three musketeers, a bird-catcher who taught us how to make bird-lime and set springs, Mr. Chorlton, a professional fisherman called Bassett, the Colonel, and

the Hermit, who was Special because he could catch rabbits with his hands.

Below the Mad Lord's unkempt park the land fell steeply towards the river: apple-trees gave place to old and crooked willows, which grew along the banks of all the ditches and beside the river itself. Brensham's cricket-field was here, on the very frontier between orchard and water-meadow: a light-green square with orchards on two sides of it and small sallows on the other two. Brensham was famous for its cricketers; it had given a dozen good players to the County team within recent memory. Its wicket was easily the best for miles around; better, some said, than Elmbury's, which was tended by two groundsmen and upon which two or three times a season the County played its too-serious games. The men of Brensham practically worshipped their smooth impeccable oblong in the square shaven field. Its High Priest was Mr. Chorlton, who marked it and mowed it and spent much of his time kneeling upon it looking for offending daisies. An acolyte, the Brensham blacksmith whose name was Briggs, rolled it every Sunday morning as a sort of religious rite.

Not far from the cricket-field was a backwater of the river among osier-beds, with a landing-stage which was called the Wharf: the hay-barges used to take on their loads there in the days when river-traffic went on. That had ceased long ago; but the men of Brensham, whose village was situated so curiously between the hill and the river, had never forgotten that they were watermen as well as hillmen. You could count a score of boats at the Wharf an

there were others moored up and down stream, little groups of boats tied together so that they looked like the fingers of an outspread hand, long black fishing punts, handy clinker-built tubs, mahogany sculling boats for hire to visitors, two or three sailing-dinghies with red ochre sails, some Canadian canoes, a precarious Rob Roy. . . . There were more boats pulled up on the bank for tarring or caulking, for mending or in process of building—for many of the Brensham men still made their own. They seemed to hold these craft in common; oars and rowlocks were always left on board and if you wanted a boat at Brensham you just heaved the peg out of the bank, climbed on board and rowed away—if the owner arrived later and found his boat missing he simply borrowed somebody else's. Indeed it was regarded as unmannerly at Brensham to chain your boat to a tree with a padlock as people did in less happy-go-lucky places. However, this easy-going practice applied only among the natives; strangers, whom the Brensham men called 'foreigners' even though they came from only five miles away, must hire their craft from Sammy Hunt, who owned the cottage beside the Wharf and made his living in that fashion. He also owned the osier-beds, and cut the withies every year to sell them for basket-making. Sammy was rather a curiosity among the inhabitants of Brensham for he was a sailor born and bred and such as a rule like to settle down within sight of the sea; he'd been a Master in big tramp-steamers and small liners and had sailed all over the world. Yet here he was as near as he could get to the quiet heart of England,

Master of no craft bigger than a fourteen-foot punt, with what must have seemed a mere trickle of water running past his cottage—you could throw a stone across the river easily—and the fat comfortable green fields all round him: like a land-locked salmon left behind by a flood. He still looked like a sailor, having a wrinkled mahogany face and sea-blue eyes, and he possessed a great store of tales about foreign parts and foreign peoples which he would tell you for hours while he caulked his boats or coiled down the painters all ship-shape and Bristol-fashion in their bows.

Sammy had a sort of henchman called Abraham who helped him with his boat-building, and who wove the cut withies into baskets and putcheons for eels. Abraham also acted as ferryman, and would paddle you across the river in a tarry black punt for a penny. He was a sombre silent old man who had the rare trick of driving his boat through the water without the slightest sound. He never spoke, and sometimes on still foggy days when I have seen his long punt glide silently towards me out of the murk I have remembered uncomfortably as I stepped aboard it that there was another taciturn Ferryman whose fee was also a penny.

Upstream of Sammy's cottage was the Lock, and an old mill with a wooden water-wheel, which still ground corn; and beyond was another of our landmarks, the Murder House, a stark ruin, itself rather like something that had been murdered, with its blind glassless windows and its pale rafters like ribs showing through the broken red roof. We had

explored it hesitantly at first, half-expecting to find bloodstains although fifty years had passed since the murder. A man called Fitcher had cleft the skull of a man called Gormley with a hatchet; and we played in a desultory way at being Fitchers and Gormleys, 'reconstructing the crime'. Soon, however, we heard a scrabbling in the attic, and Dick shinned up there to find a barn-owl's nest with two young birds. This interested us much more than any murder, and thereafter our concern with the place was purely ornithological. The villagers told us it was haunted, but we scoffed at them. 'The ghost is just an old barn-owl,' we said. Our curiosity about natural things was so large that we had none left over for the supernatural. Dracula, which we read about this time, bored us stiff; for we kept as a pet a real bat, captured in the Folly, and unbeknownst to our parents took it to bed with us, fleas and all.

PETER FLEMING

BRAZILIAN ADVENTURE

Introductory Note

Peter Fleming is one of those fortunate men with talents which enable him to combine travel and writing successfully. The outcome is a small selection of very stimulating books, of which *Brazilian Adventure* is a good example. As a young man he travelled widely in eastern and central Asia, generally as a special correspondent of *The Times*.

One of his more remarkable journeys was a trek from Peking across Chinese Turkistan and over the Himalayas into India in company with a Swiss. He tells the story of this in *News from Tartary*, a most absorbing picture of the countries on the roof of the world.

The scene of *Brazilian Adventure* is set in the great South American jungles. Fleming was a member of an expedition which set out from England to trace the whereabouts of a certain Colonel Fawcett. The Colonel had, seven years earlier, left the last outpost of civilisation in central Brazil; his son and another young Englishman were with him. Since that day, all three had vanished. The mystery became a sensation when it was known that the Colonel had set out to find a Lost World. 'It is certain,' he had written shortly before his disappearance, 'that amazing ruins of ancient cities—ruins incomparably

older than those in Egypt—exist in the far interior of Matto Grosso.'

But the question that intrigued the modern world was—what had happened to Colonel Fawcett? Was he dead or captive? Had he renounced modern civilisation to live among the Indians? A splendidly equipped expedition set out to find him and returned with the almost, but not quite definite proof that the Colonel and his companions were dead—slaughtered by Indians. Doubt was thrown on this four years later when a trapper arrived at the British Consulate at São Paulo with a remarkable tale of having met an old English Colonel in the heart of Matto Grosso; he was a captive, said the trapper, and disconsolate.

Public interest flared up; and it was at this moment that the 'Brazilian Adventure' began.

The expedition did not find Colonel Fawcett. Fleming's conclusions on returning to England were that he was almost certainly dead, with a million to one chance of his being alive. The Colonel's fate remains a mystery to this day.

In *Brazilian Adventure*, at the point from which the second extract is taken, the expedition has been whittled down to three—Fleming, Roger and Queiroz. They have penetrated about 120 miles into unknown territory. But their resources are waning; the one chance of progressing farther depends on getting into touch with the Indians, in the hope that they will be friendly and will stock up the depleted larder. In order to make contact, the two Englishmen have struck ahead on rec[illegible]
leaving Queiroz to guard their equipment

SNAKES

'To Throw Stones at the Serpents' (said the notice) 'is an Indication of Bad Character.'

We were in the snake farm at Butantan, outside the suburbs of São Paulo: a most amusing place. There are two main enclosures, one for venomous, the other for non-venomous varieties. A low wall surrounds two squares of sunny turf, and the turf is dotted with little round huts like foreshortened bee-hives. Here the snakes live, a representative and contented community. If they want seclusion, they can retire into the little huts. If they want exercise, they can go whipping round the outside of their enclosure, a questing head held high, their eyes for-ever gauging the height of that incarcerating wall. If they want a change of scene, they can climb the little trees and hang in looped contemplation of São Paulo's remoter villas. If they want a thrill, they can then relax their muscles and fall heavily to the ground: a thing they do with surprising frequency, reckless abandon, and a kind of brittle plopping sound which is indescribably sinister. And if they want to study human nature, there is always a foolish fresco of faces on their horizon.

Some of these snakes were extremely handsome: notably the coral snake, in a devil's livery of black and red, and a snake whose name I do not know, long, whippy, and apple-green, with large deer-like eyes. But what I admired most was their solution of

the problems of social life in a confined space.

Watching those aimlessly circumambient reptiles, I was reminded of the promenade deck of our liner. In their lithe and prowling passage round the edges of their prison I saw reflected our own dyspeptic pacings of the deck. But with what a difference! We human beings had cut particularly silly figures on those solemn, self-consciously redundant circuits. To march, for the good of our livers or our souls, round and round the deck was in itself a sane, and should have been a satisfying, practice. The trouble was that there was always someone else doing it at the same time. One met them (if they were going in the opposite direction) twice in every furlong. One could not ignore them, even if they were strangers; there was not room.

At the first meeting one grinned at them with that protective self-mockery proper to a situation which both sides admit to be ridiculous and unnatural. At the second meeting also one grinned, for the awkward comedy of encounter lost nothing by so swift, so predestined a repetition. It was not until after the third meeting that one suddenly foresaw the impossibility of conjuring up the same broad, spontaneous, and slightly deprecating smile sixteen times in every mile: not until after the fourth that one discovered how difficult it was to replace it. One could not, now, disown that recurring and perambulatory figure. One could not, after that initial smile, stride past him with a set face, as if intent solely on exercise, on breathing deeply through nose. That line of defence was already unde

by shared laughter. So both parties were driven to take refuge in a series of the most paltry evasions. By staring fixedly at an imaginary object on the vacant horizon: by feigning a rapt and frowning meditation: by blowing the nose: by examining the wrist-watch —by these, and a hundred other base superfluous shifts, one contrived to ward off the impact of too frequent recognition. It was a fine example of man's degradation by self-consciousness.

The snakes were gloriously free from anything of the sort. In the narrow ditch on the inside of their prison wall conditions were exactly analogous to conditions on the promenade deck. Snake was constantly meeting snake on a tour which both must have recognized as futile and rather ridiculous; and between snake and snake existed the same delicate barrier of class (or, as they would put it, species), the same awkward ties of fortuitous acquaintanceship, as complicated the encounters of passenger with passenger. But the snakes were perfectly equipped to deal with these petty emergencies. For their outlook—for their attitude to the social conventions—I cannot speak. Nor need I, since their anatomies were alone equal to the occasion.

However confined the space, however abrupt their meeting, the snakes never found it necessary to recognize each other's existence. They did not have to swerve, to stand aside, to deflect or interrupt their progress. They simply went straight on. Splendidly indifferent, they crawled over each other. Their speed, their poise, their air of purpose, were unaffected. With bodies touching at half a dozen points,

they could still ignore each other. Their capacity for aloofness had no physiological limitations. Enviable reptiles.

There was another enclosure, this time surrounded by a little moat, where the rattlesnakes lived. Their keeper was a bright-eyed little man with a detached, professional air; a little man, it seemed to me, of the very highest courage. His gaiters reached no higher than the knee; his hands were innocent of gloves. We had already watched, torn by anxiety for the welfare of all three parties concerned, while he drew a gigantic frog from the recesses of an anaconda's throat. Now we saw him leap the moat and, with an instrument something like a hoe, rudely evict the rattlers from their huts. He hoicked them out, bundles of fat and thrashing worms, which quickly coiled into malignant brown pustules on the bright turf. Their rattles whirred: a thin dry note of anger. Smiling indulgently, as though he were playing with puppies, the little man kicked them gently with the toe of his boot. Soon he had three or four striking with horrible speed and fury at his legs. The darted heads hit his gaiters with sharp bitter little thuds. The rattles made a scurrying, impatient noise, like dead leaves blown along a frosty road. I have never seen hate so well dramatized.

Presently he pinned a snake down, picked it up in those ungloved hands by the back of the ne·· and brought it over the moat into our midst. · Brazilians, I noticed, showed hardly any of t·· stinctive revulsion which would have fl·· through a European crowd.) Then the lit··

produced a shallow glass saucer and, thrusting it into that pale soft mouth, showed us the vicious action of the fangs. As they closed on the glass, poison flowed out in yellow mucous jets. There was a surprising amount of it. I wondered what would happen if the little man got cramp, or had a stroke. . . . But neither of these things occurred; I suppose they never do. When he had finished with the snake he threw it carelessly back over the moat; its body bounced on the hard ground like a driven partridge's. We went back to our taxis, considerably impressed.

The whole time I was up in the interior I never saw a snake of any sort.



THE LAST FLING

t was a hot, bright morning. The country looked somehow more exciting, promised more, than usual. Perhaps it was the knowledge that we were close to Indians, that at any moment a string of little black figures might debouch across the blank yellow grass between two distant clumps of trees. Perhaps it was the lie of the land, the disposition of the solitary or clustered trees which picketed its desolation, that lent it a fortuitous attraction: just as, at a shoot where all the covers are new to you, one irrationally arouses higher hopes than the others. But I think that really it was I, and not that immutable plateau, who was different on that blazing morning, still acrid with last night's smoke.

Hitherto my imagination had not been fired by the thought that we were in a place never before visited by white men. There were several reasons for this. I abhor labels, and I am not impressed by records. If you tell me that a thing is the largest, or the oldest, or the newest of its kind in the world, I feel no awe: I am not conscious of that sense of privilege which the mere fact of being in its presence ought by rights to arouse in me. I am, if anything, rather prejudiced against it. For by that braggart and fortuitous superlative the thing seems to me to be laying claim to a respect which has nothing to do with its *essential qualities. The phrase 'to go one better'* has come to be very loosely used; it is too often forgotten that to exceed is not necessarily to excel.

In my mind the thought of the word Untrodden aroused some shadow of this prejudice. I looked at those plumed expanses, aching in the heat, at the inviolable murmurous reaches of our river, and I did my very best to feel like stout Cortés. But it was no good. Common sense strangled at birth the delights of discovery, showing them to be no more than an unusually artificial brand of snobbery.

After all, common sense pointed out, the things you see would look exactly the same if you were not the first but the twenty-first white man to see them. You know perfectly well that there is for practical purposes no difference between a place to which no *one has been and a place to which hardly anyone has* been. Moreover it is quite clear that your visit is going to be entirely valueless; for all the useful data you are capable of bringing back the Great Unkno–

will be the Great Unknown still. You will have made a negligible reduction in that area of the earth's surface which may be said to be Untrodden; that is all. On your return you will write a book in which you will define at some length the indefinable sensations experienced on entering territory never entered before by a white man; but you know perfectly well that these sensations are no more than the joint product of your imagination and literary precedent—that at the time you were feeling only tired and hungry, and were in fact altogether impervious to whatever spurious attractions the epithet Untrodden is supposed to confer on a locality.

So far common sense had had things all its own way. But on this fiery golden morning, plodding across those decorative and enigmatic wastes, I became suddenly converted to the irrational, the romantic point of view. I felt all at once lordly and exclusive. After all, nobody had been here before. Even if we found the spoor of no prehistoric monsters, even if we brought back no curious treasures and only rather boring tales, even if we were unable to give more than the vaguest geographical indication of where exactly it was that we had been—even if these and many other circumstances branded our venture as the sheerest anti-climax—Roger and I would have done a thing which it is becoming increasingly difficult to do—would have broken new ground on this overcrowded planet. As an achievement it was quaint rather than impressive: like being married in an aeroplane, or ringing up Golder's Green from San Francisco. But as long as one recognized it as freakish

rather than creditable, as long as one never forgot how little it was really worth, it would be to one for ever a source of rather amused satisfaction.

In this comfortable though childish frame of mind I stumbled through the long grass beside Roger. We were making for a distant clump of very tall trees, which was as good a goal as our aimless purpose required, and a better landmark than most of the scenery on this empty stage provided. We were expecting—at this date, so long after disillusionment, it is odd to remember how confidently we were expecting—to sight at any moment a range of mountains: the Serra do Roncador, no less, the Snoring Mountains. Hardly a map of those which we had seen—from the most cautiously non-committal to the most recklessly chimerical—but had stamped those words across the country before us, the country between the Araguaya and the Xingú. But our horizon remained empty; we might as well have searched it for the Angels of Mons. The Serra do Roncador does not exist; or exists elsewhere. One of the first things I read on my return to London was the statement of Mr. Petrullo, of the Pennsylvania University Expedition, who flew over some of the Kuluene country, that ' the supposed range of mountains does not exist '.

But we could not know this at the time. We could not know that the Serra do Roncador was a figment of the fevered imagination of Brazilian cartographers, a stage property in the unauthenticated legends of Indians. Somewhere at the far end of the shimmering, unnumbered miles in front of us we looked for mountains.

We came at last to the clump of very tall trees. We passed the cordon of indolent palms which fringed it. We crossed the hard cracked bed of a dried up pool which had given the trees their extra cubits. On the far side we found one which looked as if it could be climbed. We piled our equipment at its roots and went up.

Climbing trees made us realize how far we were from being in the best of condition. The last few days had geared us for solid unrelenting endurance: not for frantic acrobatics, which told on us more than they should have. In physical emergencies we discovered alarming weakness.

All the same, we followed the branches as far as they would take us and clung, sweating, to the last tapering forks, sixty or seventy feet above the ground. All round us the heads of palms nodded in gracious, slightly ironical condescension. We had a magnificent view of the Great Unknown.

To us it looked familiar. Open country, quilted with the tops of close-set clumps of trees, stretched as far as the eye could reach: and doubtless farther. We cursed the visibility, which was bad; last night's smoke lingered as a tenuous haze. We had hoped from here to see those mountains.

It is always pleasant to be higher than one's surroundings; sky-scrapers have contributed materially to American self-confidence. We hung there, cooling, as our tree swung slowly to and fro. I ran my eyes along the river's carapace of jungle, searching for a break.

Then something happened that changed all the

values of that spacious but unresponsive scene. From beyond the river's guardian belt of trees—here at its narrowest—a yellowish club-shaped cloud of smoke rose slowly and began to spread. We watched it. We were too far away to hear the ravening of the flames. We could see only the smoke, a sudden, bulbous, and significant growth above the green wall of trees less than a mile away: laborious but dramatic in its rise, like the beanstalk in a pantomime. We were indeed close to Indians; and they knew it.

Looking back along the way we had come, we saw the smoke from Queiroz's fire, a diffuse brackish stain across the blue sky. It was being answered.

'Come on,' said Roger.

We were both rather excited. We swarmed down the tree, to the ominous but unregarded sound of tearing. Then we picked up our equipment and the rook rifle and made for the jungle.

For once, the jungle did us a good turn (though we did not feel like that about it at the time). It tripped us up on the threshold of what would probably have been disaster. Forced to scramble and make detours, cut off by the enclosing trees from the irresistible beckoning of that pillar of smoke, our forlorn hope lost impetus. By the time we reached the river, sanity, sponsored by exhaustion, had returned; and the smoke had thinned and spread, so that you could no longer trace its original source. Moreover, the river was deep here, too deep to be crossed without stripping: a thing we were loath to do while we stood a good chance of being attacked. Also the jungle on the further bank was inordinately

thick; it would be folly to cut our way through it when our only hope lay in silence.

We were disappointed. Anti-climax, as usual. Our high hopes withered. Our excitement, like the smoke, was dissipated. We began to drop down-stream along the river, searching for a clearing on the opposite bank. Vestiges were plentiful. I wondered if the Indians had marked us down, or if they thought of us as being out on the campo, near our smoke.

We had only the river bank to march by, and that led us on a twisting course. It was a long time before we found the place we wanted: a good and strategically strong camping ground, with only a thin fringe of trees on the opposite, the Indian bank, between the river and the campo.

But it was past noon. If we were to get back to Queiroz and bring up the gear before nightfall we had no time to reconnoitre the opposite bank now. We marked the place and went on working our way down stream.

The going was bad, but we hesitated to strike back on to the campo, where it was better. Queiroz's fire, lit with such forethought for our guidance, had exceeded its terms of reference, spreading swiftly over a huge tract of country and making a holocaust of all our landmarks. It was better to play for safety and stick to the river bank, which must eventually lead us back to our base, by however maddeningly tortuous a route. We had a strenuous, groping afternoon.

Queiroz received the news that Indians had answered our smoke with his usual impassivity. We

ate a partridge which I had shot, a particularly well-knit bird, and shouldered our loads. We got back to the chosen camping ground with an hour to spare before nightfall. It was a good place, sandy and secret and backed by thick cover which made the distant possibilities of night attack even more remote. The river here had altogether changed its nature. It was no longer swift and shallow and much overgrown, but ran in a deep and very nearly stagnant channel between steep and sometimes rocky banks. Though we were a stage nearer its source it seemed to have grown rather than diminished.

There was some talk of crossing to the other bank after dark and taking compass bearings on anything that looked like a camp fire, so that in to-morrow's reconnaissance we should have some clue to work on. I wanted to have a look at the lie of the land; so while Queiroz was making a fire I stripped and tied a pair of trousers round my head and waded across. The water came up to my neck; the river was deeper here than we had known it since we had left São Domingo.

As usual, the open country on the other side was less open than it looked. The scattered trees and the tall grass made a screen which the eye could not penetrate to any great depth. About 400 yards inland there was a thickish belt of low scrub, and on the edge of it stood a tree with a broad but curiously twisted trunk. This I climbed.

I stayed up it for half an hour, and in that half hour the world below me changed. A wind began to sing in the sparse leaves round my observation

post. The sky darkened. Massed black cohorts of clouds assembled in the west and came up across the sky under streaming pennons. The wind rose till its voice was a scream; great weals appeared in the upstanding grass, and in the straining thickets the undersides of leaves showed pale and quivering in panic. My tree groaned and bent and trembled. The sky grew darker still.

The earth was ablaze. That fire which the Indians had lit raced forward under the trampling clouds, and behind me, on the other side of the river, a long battle-line of flames was leaping out across the campo we had fired that morning. Huge clouds of smoke charged down the wind, twisting tormented plumes of yellow and black and grey. The air was full of fleeting shreds of burnt stuff. The fall of sparks threw out little skirmishing fires before the main body of the flames. A dead tree close beside me went up with a roar while the fire was still half a mile away.

There was something malevolent in its swift advance. The light thickened and grew yellow; the threatening sky was scorched and lurid. If there could be hell on earth, I thought, this is what it would look like. I remember with a curious distinctness a picture which had made a great impression on me as a child: a crude, old-fashioned picture of a prairie fire in a book of adventure. Swung to and fro among the gesturing branches of my tree, I saw again in memory every detail of that picture: the long grass flattened in the wind, the fierce and over-stated glare of the approaching fire: and in the foreground a herd of wild horses

in panic flight. I remembered that they were led—inevitably—by a grey: that a black horse in the right hand corner of the picture had fallen and would be trampled to death. I even recalled the place and time when I had first seen this picture: the dark winter afternoon, the nursery in which I was recovering from illness, the smooth brass rail on top of the high fender gleaming in the firelight, the shape of the little tree outside the window where half a coconut always hung for the tits. I realized with surprise how near the distant image in that picture had been to the reality now before me, and how curiously the fascination exerted by the image had foreshadowed the fascination exerted by the reality.

There was indeed a kind of horrible beauty in the scene. A fury had fallen upon the world. All the sounds, all the colours, expressed daemonic anger. The ponderous and inky clouds, the flames stampeding wantonly, the ungovernable screaming of the wind, the murky yellow light—all these combined to create an atmosphere of monstrous, elemental crisis. The world would split, the sky would fall; things could never be the same after this.

The fire was almost on me now, but my retreat to the river was open and secure. Flames flattened and straining in the wind licked into the belt of scrub beside my tree; great gusts of heat came up from below and struck me. Little birds—why so tardily, I wondered—fled crying to the trees on the river bank. Two big kites warily quartered the frontiers of the fire, though I never saw either stoop. Presently one of them came and sat on a branch below me, so

close that I could have hit him with a stick. He stayed there brooding majestically, with his proud eyes, over the work of desolation. Every now and then he shrugged himself and fluffed his feathers: for fear, I suppose, that he might entertain a spark unawares. I felt oddly friendly towards him, as one might to a coastguard in a storm; his imperturbability, his air of having seen a good deal of this sort of thing in his time, were comforting. But a spark stung my naked back, and I swore. The kite looked at me in a deprecating way and dropped downwind to the next tree.

Then the storm broke. It opened first a random fire of huge icy drops. I saw that we were in for worse and scrambled down the tree: not without regret, for I had seen a fine and curious sight and would willingly have watched for longer, the cataclysmic evening having gone a little to my head. But shelter of a sort was essential, and I found the best available under the trees on the river bank.

On the opposite side Roger and Queiroz had bundled our belongings into a hole between the root of a tree and were sitting on them, to keep them dry It was a hopeless task, though. There began such rain as I had never seen before. It fell in sheets an with ferocity. It was ice-cold. It beat the placi river into a convulsive stew. The world darkene thunder leapt and volleyed in the sky. From time time lightning would drain the colour and the su stance from our surroundings, leaving us to bli timidly at masses of vegetation which had be suddenly shown up as pale elaborate silhouettes,

earthly, ephemeral, and doomed. The rain beat land and water till they roared. The thunder made such noise in heaven as would shortly crack the fabric of the universe. The turmoil was almost too great to intimidate. It could not be with us that Nature had picked so grandiose a quarrel; her strife was internecine. Dwarfed into a safe irrelevance, dwarfed so that we seemed no longer to exist, we had no part in these upheavals. Roger and I smiled at each other across the loud waters with stiff and frozen faces.

The thunder drew slowly off. The rain fell still, but no longer with intolerable force. I slipped into the river, on my way across, and found it so warm that I wished that I had gone to it for shelter from the numbing rain.

The trees had done something to protect our fire, but it was almost out. Shivering like pointers, Roger and I knelt over it in curious heraldic attitudes; our bodies sheltered the last dispirited embers and kept the fire alive. We were so cold that we could hardly speak.

But presently the rain stopped, and the fire was coaxed out of its negative frame of mind into a brisk assertiveness. We thawed, and began to cook a meal and to review the situation.

It was not so much a situation as a predicament. Everything we had with us was soaked. It is true that in this circumstance there was no cause for immediate alarm. We should no doubt survive a night spent in clothes which were after all not much wetter with the rain than they normally were with our sweat. The little that was left of our food was

not in a form which could be spoilt even by what corresponded to total and prolonged immersion. As for the films and cameras, their ruin would not prejudice our chances of survival. As far as our possessions were concerned, the storm had left us virtually unscathed.

There were, it is true, our weapons: the little rifle and the revolver. We depended on the one for food, and we might have to depend on the other for defence. Both were wet; they were rusting before our eyes, for lack of a dry stitch to wipe them with. Their never very reliable mechanism would be in a horrible condition by the morning.

But there was more to it than the certainty of an uncomfortable night and the danger of a partial disarmament. We had good reason to feel daunted as well as draggled. For we could not afford to look on this storm as an isolated phenomenon, an unlucky fluke, a source only of easily bearable inconvenience. We had to admit that it looked very much as if we had seen the beginning of the rains.

We knew what it meant if we had. We should have to turn tail and run for it, guzzling quinine as we went; even if all turned out for the best there were at least five hard weeks of travel between us and the nearest roof. If this was really the rains, we should be lucky if we all three got down to Pará with our skins.

The worst of it was, there was every reason to suppose that it was the rains, or at any rate that they were almost upon us. Local opinion set their advent for early September; and these were the last days of

August. The two storms in the last week were the first rain we had seen in Brazil.

All through the night the sky was threatening. It was too cold to sleep very much; Roger and I, huddled over the hissing fire, drowsily debated the merits of retreat and advance. In the end we put off a decision till the morning.

In the morning the sun was reinstated. The sky was bland and blue, pretending that it had never been anything else. But the ground steamed; as birds moved in the branches there was a staccato patter of drips. Our clothes were still wet. The little rifle was red with rust. We set about facing the facts.

Lacking the gift of prophecy, or a meteorological flair, we decided to ignore for the moment the relation between last night's storm and the approaching rains, and to assume for the purposes of argument that we had several weeks in hand before they broke.

In the light of this unwarrantable assumption we examined the situation. Our total food supply was now as follows:

One half pound tin of Quaker Oats.
One and a half hunks of rapadura.[1]
Two ounces of Horlick's Malted Milk Powder.
One ounce of tea.
A quantity of salt, estimated by Roger (who carried it) at a ton or slightly over.
Half a pound (approximately) of sediment at the bottom of the sack, comprising farinha, chocolate, biscuit crumbs, toilet paper, ants, blood,

[1] A substance like toffee made from sugar and sold in bricks.

sweat, and tobacco. (But in the process of taking the inventory most of this got eaten.)

This sounds as if we were on the verge of starvation. Actually we were very far from it, as long as the little deer continued accommodating and plentiful, and the .22 did not let us down. But it will be clear to the discerning reader that our reserves of food were too limited to permit of any protracted operations in the field: unless, of course, we could supplement them.

Our chances of doing this were problematical. We were close to Indians, who in the absence of evidence to the contrary must be assumed to be hostile. We should certainly not meet them unless they wanted to meet us; and though clearly aware of our presence it looked as if they belonged to that class of persons (happily almost extinct in the civilized world) who are said to keep themselves to themselves. Besides, even if we did meet them, and they did prove friendly, there was little likelihood of their having with them enough food to put our commissariat on its feet again: I remembered those exiguous bundles of mandioca, those few poor heads of maize, which were all the Tapirapes took with them on the march.

In short, we had at that moment just enough food to see us through the journey back to São Domingo. Were we justified in chancing our luck and using that food for a further advance of two or three days, relying on our digestions and the .22 to get us home on a purely meat diet?

We decided that we were not. I know that this

decision was theoretically sound; and in practice, as things turned out, it was extraordinarily lucky that we took it, for when we got back to São Domingo, the supplies we had left there had disappeared and our iron rations had to last us until we got back to the Araguaya. But it went against the grain to turn back on that clear and lovely morning. We were certainly within a hundred miles of the place where Fawcett met his death, and the distance may have been considerably less if he made good progress on those days when the Kalapalos were watching his fires. Provided the rains held off, we could very easily have kept going for two or three days more until we ran completely out of food. But we should have had a bad time of it or the way back, and I hardly think we should have done much good. If one of us had gone lame, or if anything had happened to the .22, it is improbable that we should have got out at all.

But I felt very sorry to be giving up this ridiculous scramble; it had been great fun. As we strapped on our still sodden loads an enormous alligator, the biggest I have ever seen, came quietly gliding up the narrow channel opposite our camp (I wondered where it had been when I waded the river the night before). Here was a chance to work off some of our resentment against unkind circumstances; and as it drew level I took a careful shot with the .22 and got it in the eye.

That was probably the most phenomenal result ever produced with a rook rifle. The peaceful river boiled. The alligator thrashed its head from side to

side in agony. Then, as the tiny bullet touched (I suppose) its brain, it reared itself out upon the further bank and lay there, killed with a crumb of lead.

There was no time to strip off my load and wade across to measure it: though I should have liked to do this, for it really was a very big one. We left it sprawling there, to mark the futile end, reached with much difficulty, of a hopeless quest. If those secret Indians came to our camp after we had gone (as I expect they did) I hope they were suitably impressed by a monster so mysteriously dead.

EXERCISES

THE KON-TIKI EXPEDITION

1. What is—
   falsetto, a parasite, a dolphin, a zoologist, an ethnologist?
2. In the last two paragraphs of 'Whale Shark', how has the writer conveyed to you—
   (a) the impression of monstrosity;
   (b) the impression of pandemonium after the strike?
3. Find out all you can about the whale shark.
4. The writer treats the macabre theme of the head-hunters with a light touch. What evidence of humour do you find in the extract?
   Do you consider that a heavier, more dramatic approach to the story would have increased its effectiveness?
5. Using *direct speech* only, describe Herman's alarming adventure and escape from drowning.

EASTERN APPROACHES

Approach to Bokhara

1. Read the extract through twice, lay the book aside and answer the following questions:
   (a) How did Fitzroy Maclean get from Kagan to Bokhara?

(b) Why was he being followed?
(c) Why did Dr. Wolff go to Bokhara?
(d) Why were the population surprised at Dr. Wolff's departure from Bokhara?

2. Draw a map of Fitzroy Maclean's journey from Moscow to Bokhara. Put on to it all the information of geographical interest which he gives about the route.

3. Give examples of Fitzroy Maclean's skill as a descriptive writer.

4. What evidence is there in this extract that the writer is in Asia rather than Europe?

5. Record the interview between the Emir Nasrullah and Dr. Wolff.

Kidnap

1. Express the meaning of the following words—pretext, lavish, equivocal, copious, unorthodox, ebullience.

2. (a) Why did the British Consul enter so enthusiastically into the plot?
(b) Why were the occupants of the 'two plain vans' so 'bitterly disappointed'?
(c) Why did not Fitzroy Maclean adopt the ambush plan?

3. This exploit might make an entertaining film. Draw up a detailed plan of the scenes that you, as producer, would have shot. Do not forget to

get as much local colour and atmosphere on to the screen as possible.
Give your film a title.

4. Fitzroy Maclean has a keen eye for the ridiculous. What evidence of this do you find in the above extract?
5. Imagine that you are taking a walk through an eastern town. Describe the sights you see.

NELSON

1. (a) Why did the French aim at masts and rigging?
   (b) Why do you think Nelson made a conspicuous target?
   (c) Why was Nelson so anxious to anchor after the action?
   (d) What evidence did the bluejackets on the *Ajax* give of their 'sang-froid'?
2. Explain the meaning of the following words—
   synchronise, impetus, acrid, accumulation, formal, decorous, cadence, discernible.
3. What do you learn of naval battle tactics in Nelson's time from these extracts?
4. What insight into Nelson's character do you glean from reading this account of his last hours?
5. As a midshipman on the *Royal Sovereign*, write a letter to your parents describing the scene on board as the famous signal 'England expects . . .' fluttered to the masthead of the *Victory*

ENGLAND, THEIR ENGLAND

1. (*a*) Why did the professor of ballistics sigh deeply?
   (*b*) Why did Mr. Harcourt smile demoniacally?
   (*c*) Why was Donald impressed by the extraordinary subtlety of the game?
   (*d*) Why did Mr. Hodge disagree profoundly with the Emperor's dictum?
   (*e*) How did Captain Hodge restore the *status quo*?
2. Punctuate—

   I was bowling for that observed Mr. Hodge modestly strolling up the pitch I had plenty of time to use my hands remarked the wicket keeper to the world at large but I preferred to kick it.
3. In 40-50 words describe either Mr. Hodge or the blacksmith.
4. This extract might be called a great piece of humorous writing. Give your reasons for agreeing, or disagreeing, with this statement.
5. Prepare a speech either for or against the motion—
   ' Cricket has every right to be called the English national game.'

INDEPENDENT MEMBER

1. *Punctuate the following passage from* ' A Critic in the Blitz '—

   The boys clattered back down the wooden steps and Stan Atkins yelled skip where are you its all right skip fire watcher says its all insured I took a poor view of that though the fire watcher I am sure had offered information not advice you carry on I said and they saved I suppose more bundles of st. hildas.

2. *What does the author mean by*—
   (*a*) ' I am two persons, one the dashing centre-forward, and the other a most discontented manager on the side-line ' (p. 67, ll. 30–2).
   (*b*) ' And if he has not got a good answer, though he completes the course with a confident air and does a jaunty jump or two, he will be uneasily aware that he knocked down the big fence in the middle ' (p. 70, ll. 7–11).
   (*c*) ' . . . such a limitation does not seem to me to be in accordance with the traditions of His Majesty's Navy ' (p. 75, ll. 3–5).
   (*d*) ' My mate, and others to whom I showed the epistle, said that if I wanted to be flung out of the Navy or into the cells at Chatham Barracks, I had probably taken the best and quickest course ' (p. 75, ll. 10–13).

3. *Read* ' Torture Chamber ' *through twice, lay the book aside and write down all the difficulties that face a back-bencher making a speech in the House.*

4. What evidence do you find in these extracts of A. P. Herbert's renowned sense of humour?

5. State which of the three extracts you like bes Give reasons for your choice.

STOLEN JOURNEY

1. Express the meaning of the following words as used in this extract—

   objective, auspicious, super-imposed, palaver, consternation, reconnaissance, gyration, inebriated.

. 'the crane . . . brought up a grabful of coal. This *it swung across and released with the sound of* a young avalanche deep into the ship, the searchlight following it round and bathing the scene with a bright light.'

Using a sentence of perfect balance, containing within it a figure of speech and an unusual positioning of the object, the writer has painted a simple and effective picture of the scene before him.

Write a sentence of similar length describing—(*a*) a car stopping outside a theatre; (*b*) an airliner taking off; (*c*) a tramp steamer leaving the harbour.

. A writer is always trying to express himself, or herself, clearly. Read carefully Oliver Philpot's account of his adventure on the two cables your reasons for thinking that this is, or is good example of clear expression.

4. How has the writer succeeded in conveying the sense of tension felt by an escaper on the last lap to safety?

5. Carry on the conversation begun so dramatically at the end of this extract.

ELEPHANT BILL

1. Many English words are derived from Latin. For instance—patience, recognise, promoted, obstructions, negotiating, fraternise, fractured, literally—all these words from the first extract owe something to Latin.
   Find the Latin word from which each comes.

2. 'He has a pretty hard life.' That the oozie works hard is obvious; but his life must in many ways be a wonderfully satisfying one. Can you find evidence for this opinion from these extracts?

3. Describe in twenty words of your own choosing—
   (a) an elephant scratching himself with a stick;
   (b) an oozie washing his charge in a creek;
   (c) an elephant taking the strain.

4. Write a short story entitled 'Stolen fruit is always sweetest'.

5. Colonel Williams refers to the elephant as '*this* lovable animal'. What have you learnt about the elephant from these extracts which '*creates*' your affection for him?

THE JUNGLE IS NEUTRAL

1. Read the passage through twice, put the book aside and answer the following questions—
   (*a*) What is samsu?
   (*b*) What is one of Spencer Chapman's hobbies, mentioned in this extract?
   (*c*) What was dug out of Spencer Chapman's wound?
   (*d*) Why, after the successful ambush, did the guerillas cut the telephone wires?
   (*e*) 'I can remember few more unpleasant three hours in my whole life.' Why were these hours so unpleasant?

2. Spencer Chapman records that he and Haywood thought walking a 'much more healthy pastime than bicycling'.
   What dangers peculiar to bicycling under such conditions are illustrated in this extract?

3. 'Ah Loy . . . was too impetuous . . . to be a good leader.' Do you find any evidence to support such a view?

4. The incident of the ambush of the Malay policemen is briefly described. Expand it, trying to make your prose as vivid and exciting as the action must have been for the contestants.

5. Write a paragraph describing your sensations on free-wheeling down a long hill.

MAN-EATERS OF KUMAON

1. (*a*) What methods of stalking wild animals are suggested in this extract?
   (*b*) Why is special care necessary in stalking a wounded beast?
   (*c*) Why do you think Jim Corbett chose Pincha from the litter?
2. Like all great hunters, Jim Corbett has both a wonderful knowledge of animals and a great love for them.
   Give examples from this extract which bear out the truth of this statement.
3. Using the information given here and what you can find out from other sources, write a 250-word article for your school magazine on the leopard and his ways.
4. No matter how self-effacing he may be, something of the personality of a writer will penetrate through his work, especially when the first person is being employed.
   What picture of the writer do you get from reading this extract?
5. '. . . rechristened him Robin, in memory of a faithful old collie, who had saved my young brother, aged four, and myself, aged six, from the attack of an infuriated she-bear.'
   Write an account of this incident.

SEVEN PILLARS OF WISDOM

1. (*a*) Find three different uses for capital letters.
   (*b*) Why are certain words enclosed in inverted commas?
   (*c*) On p. 144, ll. 3–4, what punctuation could Lawrence have used instead of brackets?
   (*d*) Lawrence makes frequent use of the semi-colon, always with scrupulous correctness. What is its correct use?

2. Lawrence has a very big vocabulary. Thus his choice of, for instance, adjectives is varied and stimulating, e.g. 'some *hideous impossible* lump of guts' (p. 148, l. 9). Find five other examples of a striking choice of adjective.

3. We often hear tell of beautiful music and beautiful poetry. Prose also can be beautiful.
   Do you see any beauty in Lawrence's prose? Quote examples.

4. An eye for effective and picturesque detail is one of the hall-marks of a good writer.
   What examples of such detail do you find in these extracts?

5. *Either*, read through 'Feast' carefully; then write a paragraph describing your last Christmas dinner,
   Or, read through 'Something Attempted' carefully; then write a paragraph describing a cold, wet twilight.

BRENSHAM VILLAGE

1. What does the *conversation of Pistol*, Bardolph and Nym tell you about their characters and activities?
2. Pick out three similes and three metaphors which strike you as being particularly effective. Give reasons for your choice.
3. What does the writer mean by—
   (*a*) 'immortal infamy' (p. 159, l. 18);
   (*b*) 'the uncorrupted speech of Shakespeare' (p. 160, ll. 24–5);
   (*c*) 'But we brats were no moralists' (p. 164, l. 1);
   (*d*) 'he was merely a more eminent Pistol, a refinement of Bardolph, a lordlier Nym' (p. 167, ll. 23–5);
   (*e*) 'An acolyte, the Brensham blacksmith . . . rolled it every Sunday morning as a sort of religious rite' (p. 168, ll. 21–3);
   (*f*) 'another taciturn Ferryman whose fee was also a penny' (p. 170, ll. 24–5).
4. '*The hay-barges used to take on their loads there in the days when river-traffic went on. That had ceased long ago.*'
   Write a description of Brensham in 1850.
5. Write a description of the interior of Orris Manor.

BRAZILIAN ADVENTURE

Snakes

1. Express the meaning of the following words—
   incarcerating, circumambient, redundant, predestined, evasion, analogous, fortuitous, revulsion.
2. Does the author make good use of similes?
3. Peter Fleming has a dry, subtle sense of humour. What evidence of this do you find in the extract entitled ' Snakes '?
4. What evidence of skilful writing do you find in the following extracts:
   (*a*) ' If they want a thrill, they can then relax their muscles and fall heavily to the ground: a thing they do with surprising frequency, reckless abandon, and a kind of brittle plopping sound which is indescribably sinister.'
   (*b*) ' His gaiters reached no higher than the knee; his hands were innocent of gloves.'
   (*c*) ' The darted heads hit his gaiters with sharp bitter little thuds.'
   (*d*) ' He hoicked them out, bundles of fat and thrashing worms, which quickly coiled into malignant brown pustules on the bright turf.'
5. Write a ' running commentary ' on the scene as the keeper demonstrates ' the vicious action of the fangs ' to the onlookers.

The Last Fling

1. (*a*) 'The jungle did us a good turn' (p. 183, l. 19). What was that good turn?
   (*b*) 'We should have to turn tail and run for it, guzzling quinine as we went' (p. 190, ll. 22–4). Why 'guzzling quinine'?
2. 'If there could be hell on earth, I thought, this is what it would look like' (p. 186, ll. 23–4). Pick out five sentences which the author uses to paint the picture of this 'hell on earth'.
3. Read the account of the storm on p. 186 three or four times. Then put the book aside and write a brief description of a storm you have experienced yourself.
4. At the beginning of this extract, Fleming states that his imagination was not 'fired by the thought that we were in a place never before visited by white men'. He then produces arguments for both sides of the question—the 'commonsense' and 'the irrational, the romantic point of view'. Paraphrase these contrasting sentiments and draw up a conclusion of your own.
5. Write an imaginary conversation between Fleming and his companion, in which one is arguing that they ought to go on, the other that they should return to São Domingo.